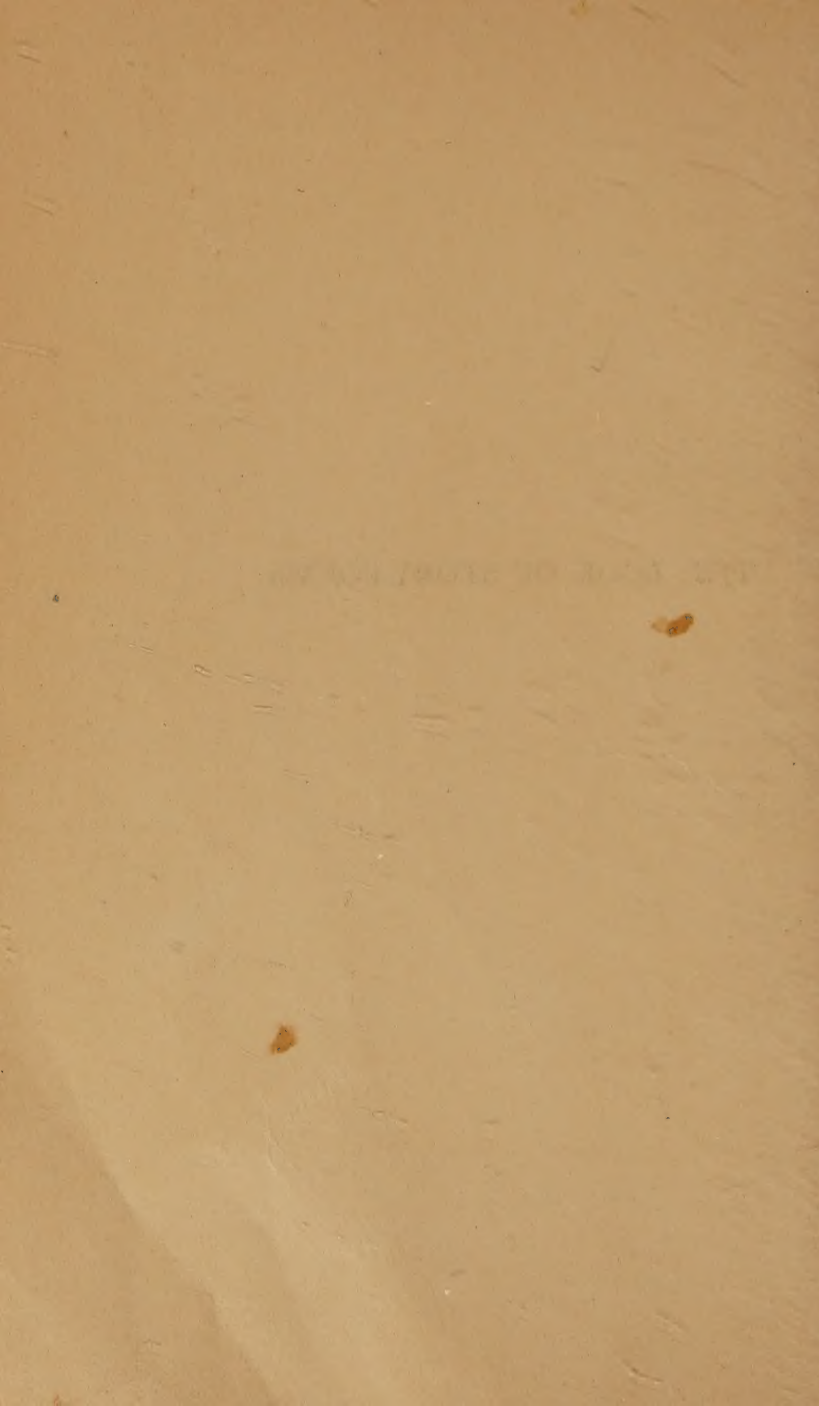
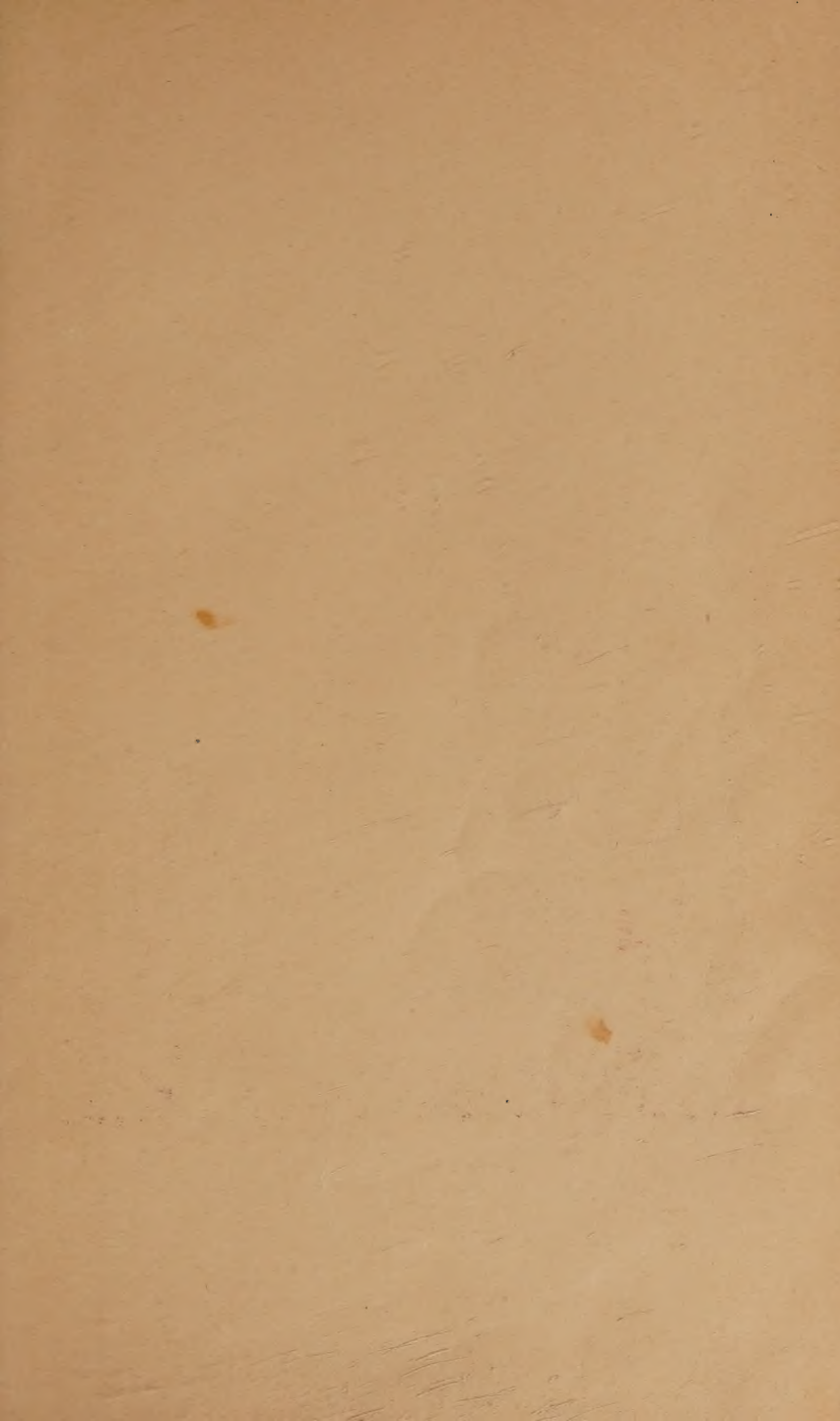


THE BOOK OF STORY-POEMS







"A-MAYING,
A-PLAYING,
FOR LOVE KNOWS NO GAIN-SAYING!"

THE BOOK OF STORY-POEMS

COMPILED BY

WALTER JERROLD

*Author of "Highways and Byways in Kent," etc., and Compiler of
"The Book of Living Poets"*

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLOR BY
CHARLES ROBINSON



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HOLLAND STRAITS
HABE HOLLAND

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INTRODUCTION

It is by the very simplest form of story poems that most of us received our first impressions of literature—long, long, that is, before we learned that such a thing as literature exists. As soon as infants are old enough to appreciate the mere sing-song of rhythmic expression we start telling them a remarkable narrative concerning the adventures of five little pigs—the piglings being indicated by a touching of the toes of the child. Whether the ticklesome touching of the toes has anything to do with the impression of the charm of rhythm on the child-mind may be left for the speculative psychologist to determine. From that germ of a story-poem we soon pass to hearing some or other of the multitude of traditional verses to which have been given the name of nursery rhymes, and in a very large proportion of those rhymes it will be found that there is a little story told or hinted at. The early liking for a story rhythmically rendered thus induced and satisfied generally continues, and that the poem which tells a story is sure of a welcome long after childhood has passed the great body of our literature abundantly shows.

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As it is with the individual, so it may be said has it been with the race. It is probable that the first poems that were said or sung—long, long, that is, before they were written or printed—told of adventurous doings in the chase or in battle, were in fact story-poems. So has it gone on through the ages. Some of the world's most famous poems—from the times of the ancient classic epics up to the present—are story-poems, many of them of a length that would more than fill the present volume. Innumerable were the briefer ballads in which our forefathers of centuries ago told their stories, countless the shorter story-poems that have been written since the printing-press took the place of the bard and the ballad-singer.

My purpose here has been to bring together in a single volume a number of complete shorter story-poems that shall be as varied as possible alike in the manner of their telling and in the matter that is told—that shall include stories as trifling in theme and versification as that of "The Spider and the Fly" and as rich in detail and the fine stuff of poetry as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Here are story-poems that have fascinated readers young and old for many successive generations, and others possessing something of the same qualities of interest in the story told and charm in the manner of

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the telling that have been written by contemporary poets. Thus new candidates for the reader's appreciation mingle with old friends throughout. In regard to those old friends as well as to those here added to the company it may be said that selection not mere collection being the guiding motive, I have elected to pass over all stories of a warlike kind. At one time war and deeds of heroism incident thereto were among the themes most frequently adopted for story-poems, and there are many pieces that are omitted with reluctance—from "Chevy Chase" to "The Revenge." As civilisation seems to be realising at long last that the elimination of warfare is no longer an inconceivable ideal I have sought to show that a goodly number of goodly story-poems may be brought together without having recourse to those which tell of fighting. This is to me the more gratifying that I was brought up in the spirit informing a poem my mother wrote many years ago on "Heroes of Peace."

"Heroes of peace our fathers were
When o'er the Atlantic's breast
They sailed three hundred years ago
To seek a home and rest.
A rest from Europe's wild turmoil,
A home of peace and love;
Led by the man in whom were blent
The lion and the dove.

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The lion in the fight of faith,
At home the dove of peace,
Whose holy aim was while on earth
That war and strife should cease."

This tribute to William Penn and his fellows, emphasising as it does the truth that Peace hath her victories and therefore her victors no less renowned than war, may also be taken as indicative of something of the idealistic unity of the British and American peoples. It was an American poet who wrote those other lines which emphasise the futility of warfare:

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need for arsenals or forts.
The warrior's name would be a name abhorrèd!
And every nation that should lift again
Its hand against a brother on its forehead
Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain."

It was a great idealistic Englishman who, driven by the temporary intolerance in his own country, founded a new home in the new world and left an inheritance of idealism that was to inform and inspire the great new nation of which he was one of the founders. In this connection it may be interesting to note that the pieces included herein might be divided into three historical divisions. Firstly,

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there will be found from that common inheritance of the Anglo-Saxon race, the old ballad literature, several stories that indicate the racial liking for a romantic love-story; then there are story-poems written in the old country, and story-poems written by those who have carried on and developed the great traditions of English literature in America—and a point suggested here is that in both we have fair evidence of racial fondness for a “moral,” implicit or explicit, and of the fact that poetry is not necessarily destroyed by “purpose” as some recent literary embroiderers would have us believe.

The poems that have been brought together here have been chosen, as the title of the volume indicates, primarily as being those in which a story is told; sometimes that story is of the slightest incidental character, sometimes a narrative of rich elaboration, sometimes it is of a kind to appeal to the most youthful of readers and sometimes of an imaginative and suggestive fulness to call for no age limit in its appreciators. In the matter of arrangement it will be observed that, excluding articles definite and indefinite, the poems are presented in alphabetical order according to their titles, thus facilitating reference to any particular piece.

Though no annotation of the poems appears to be called for, from a running comment on those

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selected one or two interesting points emerge. In the opening piece Leigh Hunt has taken a brief prose passage, an anecdote with a moral, from the 18th century French writer, D'Herbelot, and given it immortality as poetry; and the later episode of "The Glove and the Lions" by the same writer had a like origin. In "Alice Fell" and "Lucy Gray" we have two stories by Wordsworth which while not representing that poet at his highest, possess in their naive simplicity a curiously haunting quality, so that they remain in memory when more elaborate stories are read and forgotten.

"The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington" is one of the old ballad stories of parted lovers reunited in dramatic fashion of which variants will be found later in those concerning Lord Lovel and Lord Bateman and also in Kingsley's "The Weird Lady." Mr. Newman Howard's "Ballad of Sir Kay" renders in dramatic fashion an episode in the inexhaustible lore concerning King Arthur and his knights, and shows how an unworthy knight was most surprisingly convicted of his unworthiness. Keats in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" tells in vague haunting fashion of man's love for a beautiful, mysterious, vampire-like faery lady. In "The Birds of Killingworth" Longfellow teaches a lesson that by no means impairs the beauty of a narrative which

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has put all of us who are lovers of birds in the poet's debt. In the more ornate mediæval legend, "King Robert of Sicily," we have another story from the same poet's "Tales of the Wayside Inn," and one the impressive beauty of which is in no way diminished by its moral purpose. "Bishop Hatto and the Rats" tells in grim fashion an old-time German legend of the horrible fate of a man who mocked and murdered the starving peasantry brought within his power in time of famine. Another mediæval legend of grim poetic justice, also written by Robert Southey, will be found in the later "Inchcape Rock," telling of the fitting fate that befell a pirate who sought to play a murderous jest; while yet another, "The Old Women of Berkeley," renders with gruesome grimness, a mediæval legend of monkish days when an uneducated people were kept in fear of a particular kind of bogey Devil, who went about with loud noises and bad smells claiming the mortal remains of those sinners of whose souls he was supposed to have made already sure. By way of striking contrast to Southey's renderings of horrible old stories we get in Sarah Williams' "By Command" a delightful fairy 'apologue concerning the fighting which is justifiable, the tournaments wherein "no one shall be killed" yet by which as another poet

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has put it "men may rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things."

Thomas Campbell in "The Child and the Hind" gives us the simple story of a German child who was lost and long sought before being found in a deer-park where it had been surprisingly succoured by one of the deer. A later piece by the same poet, "Lord Ullin's Daughter," tells of the tragic result of an elopement, and a father's forgiveness that came too late. "The Children in the Wood" is a very old ballad concerning the fate of two small orphans who having been left to the care of a mercenary uncle, were taken to perish in a wood. The story has been told in many forms, has frequently been made the subject of pantomimes, and is familiar to a large number of people who have never read it in this original ballad form. Mr. Alfred Noyes in "The Companion of a Mile" weaves a tender-humorous romance out of the exploit of the Elizabethan morrice dancer, William Kemp, who in 1599 danced all the way from London to Norwich, and out of that bare historical fact has developed a beautiful richly coloured narrative in appropriately tripping measures. In this poem are included a number of delightful lyrics and rollicking choruses that grow out of the narrative. An old favourite, ever fresh in its simple human charm, is "The

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Courtin' "—that little gem of combined poetry and humour which it may well be believed will long outlive all the rest of those arriding "Biglow Papers" in which it was originally embedded. Later are given the same poet's story of the coming of poetry to the earth when Apollo served as "The Shepherd of King Admetus;" and "The Singing Leaves" a romance—variant of the youngest daughter's seemingly foolish but truly wise choice which in nursery lore has given us the tale of "Beauty and the Beast" and in tragedy Shakespeare's "King Lear."

Oliver Wendell Holmes in "The Deacon's Masterpiece" wrote one of the most widely popular of the story-poems of his time, a delicious piece of mock-serious drollery, in which the story of the parson's chaise during the hundred years of its existence is most entertainingly traced. In the next piece, "The Dean of Santiago" by Dora Sigerson Shorter, a whole self centred life is prophetically revealed in visionary fashion in an hour's interview with a student of magic. Thomas Hood's "The Demon Ship," and his later piece "The Fall," are capital examples of this poet's manner of rendering a kind of cumulative terror—a piling up of the agony, as the saying is,—to close on a note of sudden surprise which causes prompt laughter by the

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quick reversal of the reader's feelings. In the later piece it may be said that the nightmare account of the fall over Niagara is a playing with the title of a one-time popular American novel, "Edgar Huntly; or, "The Memoirs of a Sleepwalker" by Charles Brockedon Brown. Cowper's "Diverting History of John Gilpin" is one of the very few lastingly popular story-poems that were given to us by the 18th century. Another slight story of Cowper's, "Pairing Time Anticipated," tells how certain birds made their nests too soon—and a moral is appended in true 18th century fashion. "The Duel" by Eugene Field is one of the many fanciful drolleries written for the littlest of readers by one of their own particular poets. The fighting of which it tells is of a kind that scarcely calls for exclusion! The later piece by the same writer "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" is also for the youngest readers' entertainment telling as it does of the fanciful excursion at sleepy-time of the three whose names by themselves, frequently repeated, have something of the effect of a magic lullaby. Another poem from the 18th century is Oliver Goldsmith's ballad of "Edwin and Angelina"—whose twinned names long since came to be used as synonymous with romantic young lovers.

"The Enchanted Shirt" by John Hay is a deli-

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ciously rendered story of moralised drollery. Hay, as other poets before and since have done, took an old theme and touched it into literary immortality. The story seems originally to have been told by an 18th century Italian writer, Casti. A rendering of it into English made some twenty years before Hay was born may be cited as serving to indicate how with his wit and humour the American poet made it over anew. The climax of that earlier version runs thus :

"The sage declared that he had found a wight,
After much toil, who, in the ring's despight,
Professed himself contented with his lot—
But added that the Shirt he had not got.
'Not got the Shirt!—by Heavens 'tis barefaced treason!'
'Pause ere ye judge,—and ponder well the reason:
To cure his Majesty I have a plan
My loyal Lords,' exclaimed the smiling Mirthvun:
'It hath been taught me by THE HAPPY MAN—
But for his shirt—by Allah! *he's not worth one!*'"

Mary Howitt in "The Fairies of the Caldon Low" and the later "Voyage with the Nautilus" presents, with simple charm imaginative child-adventurings in a fashion which must appeal to all who like to indulge now and then in a little day-dreaming. Her fearsome tale of "The Spider and the Fly" is included as being a story widely known by its opening line yet not readily accessible. Its place is may-

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be rather among nursery rhymes than here but it is given with one or two other of the pieces that the youngest reader of all may not be overlooked. "The Fakenham Ghost" by the peasant-poet Robert Bloomfield is a rustic tale that may help to remove fear of those "ghostly" sounds which on careful enquiry are so often traceable to an origin no less ludicrous than that of the wandering donkey. By way of striking contrast comes next Matthew Arnold's story of imaginative fairyland romance of the woman who had wedded a merman and was called back to her fellow mortals by the sound of church bells, and so "left lonely for ever the kings of the sea." Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," which comes next has been well described by another poet as the most naive and childlike poem in our language, the most perfect realisation of those happy and fantastic aspects of the supernatural which we call Fairyland. I have heard a child-reader sum up this wonderful story-poem as "fearfully fascinating," and though it is rather long for inclusion here, I find its claims as story and as poem not less insistent than those of the other lengthy pieces given. The same poet's "Maiden Song" is a very different story of sisters set in a sort of fanciful fairyland of romance. Tennyson in "The Goose" also made an excursion into fairyland, rendering in

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his own particular fashion that familiar moral story of nursery lore concerning the goose that laid a golden egg. Later examples from Tennyson, "Lady Clare" and "The Lord of Burleigh" tell, each in its own way, how true love cancels mere class distinctions. In "The Guerdon" Thomas Bailey Aldrich presents a slight but tenderly impressive mediæval episode of the old misshapen minstrel who receives in dreamland from his princess the guerdon of a kiss for the beautiful songs that he had sung.

The spirited narrative of a dashing ride set forth by Robert Browning in "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" is an imaginative story presented with such verisimilitude that we are set wondering as to what the good news was that was so strenuously carried. The same poet's "Pied Piper of Hamelin," which comes later in the book, deals with an actual legend concerning the German town of Hameln. Those people who visit that town, with its many beautifully preserved mediæval houses, find the story of the magic Piper still very much alive there—will find it even recorded on one of the buildings—and learn that at long intervals the whole story is by way of pageant acted over again in the very streets through which the Piper successively led the rats and the children. Those

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who travel further afield into south-eastern Europe may find in Transylvania purely German districts, isolated among those of Roumanians and Magyars, affording "proof" as to the truth of the legend, for Romance may well say here are the descendants of the young people spirited away from Hamelin, though History offers more matter-of-fact reasons for these German colonies in Transylvania. Jean Ingelow tells a tender tragic story of "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, 1571" and does so with a real depth of feeling and a lasting impressiveness which stamp it as one of the very finest examples of our modern ballad-poems. It tells movingly and vividly of a disaster which befell near that Boston in England from which the more famous Boston in America took its name, and as the date of the disastrous flood was over half a century earlier than the founding of Boston, Massachusetts, by settlers from Boston, Lincolnshire, it may be said to belong to the traditions of the people of both places.

Humorous is the story of "The Jackdaw of Rheims" one of the many drolleries set forth in tripping verse by Richard Harris Barham in his "Ingoldsby Legends." Sir Walter Scott's lyric story "Jock of Hazeldean" was written as a completion of the first of its verses which is much earlier

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than the time of Scott. The theme of the whole is similar to that of the same author's "Young Lochinvar"—in each case a forced marriage is frustrated at the last moment by the elopement of the bride with her true lover. Another of Scott's song-stories, that of the lovely "Rosabelle," tells of the tragic fate of one who braved the storm and perished in an attempt to fulfil the call of love and duty. A very familiar story is that told by Eliza Cook in "King Bruce and the Spider," the simple verse enforcing the lesson that all of us have to learn that only by repeated efforts in the face of repeated disappointments can success at length be attained. "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid," takes us back to the romantic ballads again with an old, old story that has been told in many forms, but has especial charm in the quaint language of this ancient rendering. Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh," it will be recognised, is something like a modernised variant of the old Cophetua legend. The old ballad that follows, "King John and the Abbot of Canterbury," tells a story of a kind that seems early to have proved popular and never loses its interest, that of quick wits getting their happy possessor out of a seeming quandary. Thackeray's "Little Billee" is a quaintly amusing example of literary nonsense, telling a story that is a little sug-

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gestive of the later and more elaborate "Yarn of the Nancy Bell." The later ludicrous piece by Thackeray, "A Tragic Story," telling of the sage who was perplexed by the fact that turn as he might his pig-tail persistently remained hanging behind him, is taken from a German original.

With Charles Kingsley's "My Little Doll" we reach another of the simple stories for the little one. The later story by the same poet, "The Weird Lady," is suggestive of the old ballads alike in subject and in the manner of its telling; the wandering Earl Harold who has been under the influence of a weird lady a little reminiscent of Keats's "Belle Dame Sans Merci" awakes from his "sweven" or swoon and returns to his own country to find his loving lady being buried, and to die at her grave like "Lord Lovel." "The Pool of the Diving Friar" by Thomas Love Peacock is a drollery concerning the long sought philosopher's stone which should turn everything into gold, and carries in it the implicit moral that such a stone, could it be discovered, would be but a poor possession after all.

Edgar Allen Poe's story of "The Raven" is one of the most triumphant examples that we possess of the eerie in poetry. The second piece with the same title is an early poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and is here given not only for the slight story

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of the ravens' revenge on men for cutting down their nesting tree but for the fact that the closing of the boyish piece sees a foreshadowing of the lesson running through the same author's great story-poem of the "Ancient Mariner" which follows immediately after. "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," with which our present gathering of story-poems concludes, was written as the very first of the droll "Bab Ballads" by Sir W. S. Gilbert, who has recorded that when he sent it to *Punch* some sixty years ago it was returned as being "too cannibalistic" for the taste of that journal—which suggests that Mr. Punch happened just then to be in one of his least humorous moods.

Into fairyland and other realms of the imagination, into a past when men's minds were obsessed by grim legends, and into company where wit and humour are ever riant, our story poets will here take us successively at our will.

For permission to include in this collection several copyright poems the thanks of editor and publisher are due and are hereby heartily tendered—To Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich for her husband's "The Guerdon"; to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for "The Duel" and "Wynken, Blynken and Nod" by Eugene Field; to Messrs. Houghton Mifflin Company for "The Enchanted Shirt" by John Hay; to

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Mr. Newman Howard for his "Ballad of Sir Kay"; to Mr. Alfred Noyes for his "Companion of a Mile"; and to Mr. Clement K. Shorter for "The Dean of Santiago" by Dora Sigerson Shorter.

W. J.

THE BOOK OF STORY-POEMS

ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL

ABOU Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?”—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “The names of those who love the
Lord.”

“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee then,
“Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had
blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

LEIGH HUNT

ALICE FELL; OR, POVERTY

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound—and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word;
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forwith, alighting on the ground,
“Whence comes,” said I, “this piteous moan?”

ALICE FELL; OR, POVERTY

And there a little girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?" She sobbed, "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild—
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

Then all the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play,
All but the bailiff's daughter dear;
She secretly stole away.

She pulléd off her gown of green,
And put on ragged attire,
And to fair London she would go,
Her true love to enquire.

And as she went along the high road,
The weather being hot and dry,
She sat her down upon a green bank,
And her true love came riding by.

She started up, with colour so red,
Catching hold of his bridle-rein;
"One penny, one penny, kind sir," she said,
"Will ease me of much pain."

"Before I give you a penny, sweetheart,
Pray tell me where you were born."
"At Islington, kind sir," said she,
"Where I have had many a scorn."

I prithee, sweetheart, then tell to me,
O tell me, whether you know

BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

The bailiff's daughter of Islington."

"She is dead, sir, long ago."

"If she be dead, then take my horse,
My saddle and bridle also;
For I will into some far country,
Where no man shall me know."

"O stay, O stay, thou goodly youth,
She standeth by thy side;
She is here alive, she is not dead,
And ready to be thy bride."

"O farewell grief, and welcome joy,
Ten thousand times therefore;
For now I have found my own true love,
Whom I thought I should never see more."

OLD BALLAD

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

I

WHAT, ho?
Kay the Seneschal,
Fare ye forth to the woods alone?
Yea, sooth,
And who shall hinder me?
Hardier Knight, by the Rood, there is none!

Tangled thorn, and the gliding snake,
And the whistle of owls he liketh not,
Nor the glimmer of eyes in the ashen brake,
Nor the hooves of tusked boars, God wot!

Wit ye well
A giant is bellowing!
Take to thy heels thou brave Sir Kay!
Ride! Hide!
Belike he is following:
Knights are his caudle, and fattened to flay.

Eftsoons the woeful echoes die,
The birds are merry again, I ween;

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

Braver Knight there is none than I;
Creep on thy belly the boughs between.

Hush! Ho!
Logrin is lying there,
Logrin the giant, shaggy of head:
King's son
Lohot beside him:
Which is the sleeper? which is the dead?

Creep and crawl, a blade in thy teeth,
Reach ye an arm, and sever a neck.
Doughtily done! Now delve in the heath!
Bury a body, and no man shall reck.

Hack thy shield,
Gallop to Camelot,
Brag of the buffets ye got in the fray;
Look ye, Knights,
Tied to my saddle bow
Head of the giant, slain by Sir Kay!

II

King Arthur sits at his table round,
A year and a day hath passed and gone,

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

I

WHAT, ho?
 Kay the Seneschal,
Fare ye forth to the woods alone?
Yea, sooth,
And who shall hinder me?
Hardier Knight, by the Rood, there is none!

Tangled thorn, and the gliding snake,
 And the whistle of owls he liketh not,
Nor the glimmer of eyes in the ashen brake,
 Nor the hooves of tusked boars, God wot!

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II

King Arthur sits at his table round,
A year and a day hath passed and gone,

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

And Kay, the Seneschal, still renowned,
A second marvellous deed hath done.

Cometh a maiden and in her hand
A coffer, carven of gold ywis:
—O King, I have travelled many lands,
But never a Knight may open this!

Stand forth, Sir Lancelot, quoth the King:
Thou art full hardy and deft withal;
Right craftily shalt thou do this thing.
But, alack, it might not so befall.

Then followeth many a cunning elf,
Galahad, Bors and wight Gawain;
And last of them all the King himself:
Nor ever the lid might open amain.

Then spake the lady: The saying is true
"A mettlesome carle is he that shall come
To open the coffer," for lo he slew
The hardiest knight in Christendom!

Quoth Arthur, Let call the brave Sir Kay:
A coffer of gold for a giant's head,
In sooth were a guerdon meet to pay.
And the Seneschal nought thereto gainsaid.

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

Shout, Ho!
Kay the Seneschal,
Kay who Logrin the giant bestrid,
Kay hath taken it,
Kay hath conquered it,
Kay hath opened the golden lid!

Grammercy, Knight, King Arthur cried—
'Tis mickle fame that deed shall win!
The coffer hath gotten a scroll inside,
And the grimly head of a knight therin!

What, Ho!
Read ye the writing there!
*"I am Sir Lohot: Foully I bleed:
Slain asleep:
Lying on Logrin: Who opens the coffer owns to the
deed."*

The first they saw of the bold Sir Kay
Was a smile and an orgulous port;
The last they saw of the knight that day
Was his heels as he fled the court.

* * * * *

Sing, Ho!
The story is told!

A BALLAD OF SIR KAY

Rascals may thrive for a year and a day:

Shout, Ho!

In their coffers of gold

Are the head of a corpse and the heels of Sir Kay.

NEWMAN HOWARD

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

AH, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering
The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love;
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed and sighèd deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kissed to sleep.

And there we slumbered on the moss,
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cried—"La belle dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

JOHN KEATS

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

IT was the season, when through all the land
The merle and mavis build, and building sing
Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,
Whom Saxon Caedmon calls the Blithe-heart
King;
When on the boughs the purple buds expand,
The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,
And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the blue-bird, piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee;
The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,
Clamoured their piteous prayer incessantly,
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said:
"Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,
Speaking some unknown language strange and
sweet

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed
The village with the cheers of all their fleet;
Or, quarrelling together, laughed and railed
Like foreign sailors, landed in the street
Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise
Of oaths and glibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,
In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,
That mingled with the universal mirth,
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe;
They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful
words
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway
To set a price upon the guilty heads
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,
Levied blackmail upon the garden beds
And corn-fields, and beheld without dismay
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;
The skeleton that waited at their feast,
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

Then from his house, a temple painted white,
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,
The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,
Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right,
Down the long street he walked, as one who said
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me
Can have no lack of good society!"

The parson, too, appeared, a man austere,
The instinct of whose nature was to kill;
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
And read, with fervour, Edwards on the Will;
His favourite pastime was to slay the deer
In Summer on some Adirondac hill;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass,
And all absorbed in reveries profound
Of fair Almira in the upper class,
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

And next the Deacon issued from his door,
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow;
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;
There never was so wise a man before;
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!"
And to perpetuate his great renown
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,
With sundry farmers from the region round.
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,
His air impressive and his reasoning sound;
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,
But enemies enough, who every one
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun.

When they had ended, from his place apart
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,
And, trembling like a steed before the start,
Looked round bewildered on the expectant
throng;
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,
From his Republic banished without pity
The Poets; in this little town of yours,
You put to death, by means of a Committee,
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street musicians of the heavenly city,
The birds, who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day
From the green steeples of the piney wood;
The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food;
The blue-bird balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighborhood;
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all! and wherefore? for the gain.
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,
Scratched up at random by industrious feet,
Searching for worm or weevil after rain!
Or a few cheeries, that are not so sweet
As are the songs these uninvited guests
Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

“Do you ne’er think what wondrous beings these?

Do you ne’er think who made them, and who
taught

The dialect they speak, where melodies

Alone are the interpreters of thought?

Whose household words are songs in many keys,

Sweeter than instrument of man e’er caught!

Whose habitations in the tree-tops even

Are half-way houses on the road to heaven!

“Think, every morning when the sun peeps through

The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,

How jubilant the happy birds renew

Their old, melodious madrigals of love!

And when you think of this, remember too

’Tis always morning somewhere, and above

The awakening continents, from shore to shore,

Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

“Think of your woods and orchards without birds!

Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams!

As in an idiot’s brain remembered words

Hang empty ’mid the cobwebs of his dreams!

Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds

Make up for the lost music, when your teams

Drag home the stingy harvest and no more

The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

“What! would you rather see the incessant stir
Of insects in the windrows of the hay,
And hear the locust and the grasshopper
Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play?
Is this more pleasant to you than the whir
Of meadow-lark and her sweet roundelay,
Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?

“You call them thieves and pillagers; but know,
They are the wingèd wardens of your farms,
Who from the corn-fields drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,
Renders good service as your man-at-arms,
Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

“How can I teach your children gentleness,
And mercy to the weak, and reverence:
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,
Is still a gleam of God’s omnipotence,
Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less
The selfsame light, although averted hence,
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach?”

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

With this he closed; and through the audience went
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;
The farmers laughed, and nodded, and some bent
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves;
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment
Who put their trust in bullocks and in beeves.
The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws,
But in the papers read his little speech,
And crowned his modest temples with applause;
They made him conscious, each one more than each,
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,
O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their
breasts,
Or wounded crept away from sight of man,
While the young died of famine in their nests;
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead;

The days were like hot coals; the very ground
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed

Myriads of caterpillars, and around
The cultivated fields and garden beds

Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
No foe to check their march, till they had made
The land a desert, without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,

Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun
down

The canker-worms upon the passers-by,
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl and gown,

Who shook them off with just a little cry;
They were the terror of each favourite walk,
The endless theme of all the village talk.

The farmers grew impatient, but a few
Confessed their error, and would not complain,
For, after all, the best thing one can do

When it is raining, is to let it rain.
Then they repealed the law, although they knew
It would not call the dead to life again;
As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,
Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came
Without the light of his majestic look,
The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,
The illumined pages of his Doom's-day-book.
A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,
And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,
While the wild wind went moaning everywhere
Lamenting the dead children of the air!

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,
A sight that never yet by bard was sung,
As great a wonder as it would have been
If some dumb animal had found a tongue!
A wagon, overarched with evergreen,
Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,
All full of singing birds, came down the street,
Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were
brought,
By order of the town, with anxious quest,
And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought
In woods and fields the places they loved best,
Singing loud canticles, which many thought
Were satires to the authorities addressed,
While others, listening in green lanes, averred
Such lovely music never had been heard!

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

But blither still and louder carolled they
Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know
It was the fair Almira's wedding-day,
And everywhere, around, above, below,
When the Preceptor bore his bride away,
Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,
And a new heaven bent over a new earth—
Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

BISHOP HATTO AND THE RATS

THE summer and autumn had been so wet,
That in winter the corn was growing yet,
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store,
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnished well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flocked from far and near:
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;

BISHOP HATTO AND THE RATS

And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

"I' faith 'tis an excellent bonfire!" quoth he,
"And the country is greatly obliged to me,
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of Rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returnèd he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man;
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he entered the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the Rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he looked there came a man from his farm—
He had a countenance white with alarm;
"My Lord, I opened your granaries this morn,
And the Rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,
And he was as pale as pale could be,
"Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly," quoth he,

BISHOP HATTO AND THE RATS

"Ten thousand rats are coming this way;
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!"

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,
" 'Tis the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the water deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,
And he crost the Rhine without delay,
And reached his tower, and barred with care
All the windows, doors, and loop-holes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes;
But soon a scream made him arise,
He started and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listened and looked; it was only the Cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear
At the Army of Rats that were drawing near.

For they have swum over the river so deep,
And they have climbed the shores so steep,
And up the tower their way is bent,
To do the work for which they were sent.

BISHOP HATTO AND THE RATS

They are not to be told by the dozen or score,
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more,
Such numbers had never been heard of before,
Such a judgment had never been witnessed of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder drawing near,
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows and in at the door,
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him!

ROBERT SOUTHEY

BY COMMAND

MY King sat out on his castle wall,
And a royal command gave he:
"Come hither come hither, ye people all,
And a fairy-tale bring me,
For of grammar, and crammer, and orthodox
hammer,
I have had quite enough," quoth he.

My liege's Kingdom is small as yet,
And his subjects are only two;
And sometimes it happens his Grace will fret,
"Why, you dear, I have only you!"
And in such sad case it becomes my place
The imperial will to do.

So I peeled a willow, so white, so white,
The wand that the Fairies love;
And I gathered the meadow-sweet, soft and light,
And the fox's crimson glove;
And I made a couch for the first stray sprite,
With the down of a silver dove.

BY COMMAND

"Fairy, come home!
Fairy, come home!
Where hast thou wandered to!
Where dost thou roam?

"Here is thy dwelling,
Here is thy place;
Fairy king, fairy king,
Show us thy face!"

Three times round the meadow
The little song did go;
Then there came a peal of bells
Chiming soft and low:

"Coming, coming, coming,
No one need to wait,
Wearily beseeching,
At the fairy gate.

"For the fairies, like the mortals
Love to be loved;
And the fairy palace portals
Lightly are moved."

Then a rain of footsteps
Sounded on the sward,
[34]

BY COMMAND

And a page came kneeling—
“What wills my lord?”

“I will a tournament,” said he,
“Where no one will be killed;
Where all shall gain the victory,
And be supremely skilled.”

Up rode a fairy paladin,
With coat of beetle’s mail;
Before the glistening green and gold
Sure any heart must quail.

“I see no foe,” the king complained,
“But wait,” the page implored.
And then the fairy paladin
Drew out a shining sword;

He cut and thrust all round about,
At neither sight nor sound,
Until a dastard knight they saw
Lie dead upon the ground.

“The pledge is broken!” cried the king.
“Not so,” the knight replied,
“It was my meaner self I slew,—
I live, though it has died.”

BY COMMAND

Again the paladin rode forth,
And this time seemed to seek
Some traitor that eluded him—
The little king must speak;
“Where is the foe, Sir Knight, on whom
You would your vengeance wreak?”

“It was a falsehood,” said the Knight,
“They uttered of my friend;
I tracked it down, and hunted it,
And thus its life doth end!”

Once more the paladin rode forth—
Beneath his horse's feet
There seemed to be an enemy
That he was loth to meet!
“Can you fear anything, Sir Knight?”
His smile was sad and sweet.

“It was a cruel injury,
An unforgiven pain,
But there it lieth tranquilly,—
It will not stir again.”
Then lightly springs my little king,
And merrily he sings,
“I too will be a paladin,
And fight with evil things.”

SARAH WILLIAMS

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

COME maids and matrons, to caress
Wiesbaden's gentle hind;
And smiling, deck its glossy neck
With forest flowers entwined.

Your forest flowers are fair to show,
And landscapes to enjoy;
But fairer is your friendly doe
That watched the sleeping boy.

'Twas after church—on Ascension day—
When organs ceased to sound,
Wiesbaden's people crowded gay
The deer-parks pleasant ground.

There, where Elysian meadows smile,
And noble trees upshoot,
The wild thyme and the camomile
Smell sweetly at their root;

The aspen quivers nervously,
The oak stands stilly bold,

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

And climbing bindweed hangs on high
His bells of beaten gold.

Nor stops the eye till mountains shine
That bound a spacious view
Beyond the lordly, lovely Rhine
In visionary blue.

There monuments of ages dark
Awaken thoughts sublime;
Till swifter than the steaming bark,
We mount the stream of time.

The ivy there old castles shades
That speak traditions high
Of minstrels, tournaments, crusades
And mail-clad chivalry.

Here came a twelve years' married pair—
And with them wandered free
Seven sons and daughters, blooming fair,
A gladsome sight to see.

Their Wilhelm, little innocent,
The youngest of the seven,
Was beautiful as painters paint
The cherubim of Heaven.

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

By turns he gave his hand, so dear,
To parent, sister, brother;
And each, that he was safe and near,
Confided in the other.

But Wilhelm loved the field-flowers bright,
With love beyond all measure;
And called them with as keen delight
As misers gather treasure.

Unnoticed, he contrived to glide
A down a greenwood alley,
By lilies lured that grew beside
A streamlet in the valley;

And there, where under beech and birch
The rivulet meandered,
He strayed, till neither shout nor search
Could track where he had wandered.

Still louder, with increasing dread,
They called his darling name;
But 'twas like speaking to the dead—
An echo only came.

Hours passed till evening's beetle rams
And blackbirds' songs begin;

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

Then all went back to happy homes,
Save Wilhelm's kith and kin.

The night came on—all others slept
Their cares away till morn;
But sleepless, all night watched and wept
That family forlorn.

Betimes the town-crier had been sent
With loud bell up and down;
And told the afflicting accident
Throughout Wiesbaden's town:

The father, too, ere morning smiled,
Had all his wealth uncoffered;
And to the wight would bring his child
A thousand crowns had offered.

Dear friends, who would have blushed to take
That guerdon from his hand,
Soon joined in groups—for pity's sake,
The child-exploring band.

The news reached Nassau's Duke: ere earth
Was gladdened by the lark,
He sent a hundred soldiers forth
To ransack all his park.

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

Their side-arms glittered through the wood,
With bugle horns to sound;
Would that on errand half so good
The soldier oft were found!

But though they roused up beast and bird
From many a nest and den,
No signal of success was heard
From all the hundred men.

A second morning's light expands,
Unfound the infant fair;
And Wilhelm's household wring their hands
Abandoned to despair.

But happily a poor artisan
Searched ceaselessly till he
Found safe asleep the little one
Beneath a beechen tree.

His hand still grasped a bunch of flowers;
And (true, though wondrous) near,
To sentry his reposing hours,
There stood a female deer—

Who dipped her horns at all that passed
The spot where Wilhelm lay;

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

Till force was had to hold her fast,
And bear the boy away.

Hail! sacred love of childhood—hail!
How sweet it is to trace,
Thine instinct in Creation's scale,
Even 'neath the human race.

And, thou, Wiesbaden's artisan,
Restorer of the boy,
Was ever welcomed mortal man
With such a burst of joy?

The father's ecstasy—the mother's
Hysteric bosom's swell—
The sisters' sobs—the shout of brothers,
I have not power to tell.

The working man, with shoulders broad,
Took blithely to his wife
The thousand crowns—a pleasant load,
That made him rich for life.

And Nassau's Duke the favorite took
Into his deer-park's centre,
To share a field with other pets
Where deer-slayers cannot enter.

THE CHILD AND THE HIND

There, whilst thou cropp'st thy flowery food,
Each hand shall pat thee kind;
And man shall never spill thy blood—
Wiesbaden's gentle hind.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

NOW ponder well, you parents dear,
These words which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall hear,
In time brought forth to light,
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Who did in honour far surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was, and like to die,
No help his life could save;
His wife by him as sick did lie,
And both possessed one grave.
No love between these two was lost,
Each was to other kind;
In love they lived, in love they died,
And left two babes behind.

The one a fine and pretty boy,
Not passing three years old;
The other a girl more young than he

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

And framed in beauty's mould.
The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage-day;
Which might not be controlled:
But if the children chance to die,
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess the wealth;
For so the will did run.

"Now brother," said the dying man,
"Look to my children dear;
Be good unto my boy and girl.
No friends else have they here:
To God and you I recommend
My children dear this day;
But little while be sure we have
Within this world to stay.

"You must be father and mother both,
And uncle all in one;
God knows what will become of them,

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

When I am dead and gone."
With that bespake their mother dear,
"O brother kind," quoth she,
"You are the man must bring our babes
To wealth or misery:

"And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward;
But if you otherwise should deal,
God will your deeds regard."
With lips as cold as any stone,
They kissed their children small:
"God bless you both, my children dear;"
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spake
To this sick couple there:
"The keeping of your little ones,
Sweet sister, do not fear.
God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor aught else that I have
If I do wrong your children dear
When you are laid in grave."

The parents being dead and gone
The children home he takes,
And brings them straight into his house,

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

Where much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelve month and a day,
But, for their wealth, he did devise
To make them both away.

He bargained with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young,
And slay them in a wood.
He told his wife an artful tale:
He would the children send
To be brought up in fair London,
With one that was his friend.

Away then went those pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind,
They should on cock-horse ride.
They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they rode on the way,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives decay:

So that the pretty speech they had,
Made Murder's heart relent;
And they that undertook the deed,

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

Full sore did now repent.
Yet one of them more hard of heart
Did vow to do his charge,
Because the wretch, that hired him,
Had paid him very large.

The other won't agree thereto,
So here they fall to strife;
With one another they did fight,
About the children's life:
And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slay the other there,
Within an infrequented wood;
The babes did quake for fear!

He took the children by the hand,
Tears standing in their eye,
And bade them straightway follow him,
And look they did not cry:
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain:
"Stay here," quoth he, "I'll bring you bread
When I come back again."

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and down;
But never more could see the man

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

Approaching from the town:
Their pretty lips with black-berries,
Were all besmeared and dyed,
And when they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cried.

Thus wandered these poor innocents,
Till death did end their grief,
In one anothers arms they died,
As wanting due relief:
No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin-red-breast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt an hell;
His barns were fired, his goods consumed,
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him staid.

And in a voyage to Portugal
Two of his sons did die;
And to conclude, himself was brought

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

To want and misery:
He pawned and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about,
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this means come out:

The fellow, that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to die,
Such was God's blessed will:
Who did confess the very truth,
As here hath been displayed:
Their uncle having died in gaol,
Where he for debt was laid.

You that executors be made,
And overseers eke
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek;
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such like misery
Your wicked minds requite.

OLD BALLAD

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

THWACK! Thwack! One early dawn, upon our
door

I heard the bladder of some motley fool
Bouncing, and all the dusk of London shook
With bells! I leap from bed, had I forgotten?—
I flung my casement wide and craned my neck
Over the painted Mermaid. There he stood,
His right leg yellow and his left leg blue,
With jingling cap, a sheep-bell at his tail,
Wielding his eel-skin bladder, *bang! thwack! bang!*
Catching a comrade's head with the recoil
And skipping away! All Bread Street dimly burned
Like a reflected sky, green, red and white:
With littered branches, ferns and hawthorn-clouds;
For, round Sir Fool, a frolic morrice-troop
Of players, poets, prentices, mad-cap queans,
Robins and Marians, coloured like the dawn,
And sparkling like the greenwood whence they came
With their fresh boughs all dewy from the dark,
Clamoured, *Come down! Come down, and let us in!*
High over these, I suddenly saw Sir Fool
Leap to a sign-board, swing to a conduit-head,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

And perch there, gorgeous on the morning sky,
Tossing his crimson cockscomb to the blue:
And crowing like Chanticleer, *Give them a rouse!*
Tickle it, tabourer! Nimbly, lasses, nimbly!
Tuck up your russet petticoats and dance!
Let the Cheape know it is the first of May!
And as I seized shirt, doublet and trunk-hose,
I saw the hobby-horse come cantering down,
A pasteboard steed, dappled a rosy white:
Like peach-bloom, bridled with purple, bitted with
gold,
A crimson foot-cloth on his royal flanks,
And, riding him, His Majesty of the May!
Round him the whole crowd frolicked with a shout,
And as I stumbled down the crooked stair
I heard them break into a dance and sing:—

SONG

I

Into the woods we'll trip and go,
Up and down and to and fro,
Under the moon to fetch in May,
And two by two till break of day,

A-maying,

A-playing,

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THE COMPANION OF A MILE

For Love knows no gain-saying!
Wisdom trips not? Even so—
Come, young lovers, trip and go,
 Trip and go.

II

Out of the woods we'll dance and sing
Under the morning-star of Spring,
Into the town with our fresh boughs
And knock at every sleeping house,
 Not sighing,
 Or crying,
Though Love knows no denying!
Then, round your summer queen and king,
Come, young lovers, dance and sing,
 Dance and sing!

"Chorus," the great Fool tossed his gorgeous crest,
And lustily crew against the deepening dawn,
"Chorus," till all the Cheape caught the refrain,
And, with a double thunder of frolic feet,
Its ancient nut-brown tabors woke the Strand:—
 A-maying,
 A-playing,

For Love knows no gain-saying!
Wisdom trips not? Even so,—

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Come young lovers, trip and go,
Trip and go.

Into the Mermaid with a shout they rushed
As I shot back the bolts, and *bang, thwack, bang*,
The bladder bounced about me. What cared I?
This was all England's holy-day! "Come in,
My yellow-hammers," roared Friar Tuck
Of this mad morrice, "come you into church,
My nightingales, my scraps of Lincoln green,
And hear my sermon!" On a window-seat
He stood, against the diamonded rich panes
In the old oak parlour, and, throwing back his hood,
Who should it be but Ben, rare Ben himself?
The wild troop laughed around him, some a-sprawl
On tables, kicking parti-coloured heels,
Some with their Marians jiggling on their knees,
And, in the front of all, the motley Fool
Cross-legged upon the rushes.

O, I knew him,—

Will Kemp, the player, who danced from London
town

To Norwich in nine days and was proclaimed
Freeman of Marchaunt Venturers and hedge-king
Of English morrice-dancery for ever!
His nine-day's wonder through the countryside
Was hawked by every ballad-monger. Kemp

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Raged at their shake-rag Muses. None but I
Guessed ever for what reason, since he chose
His anticks for himself and, in his games,
Was more than most May-fools fantastical.
I watched his thin face, as he rocked and crooned,
Shaking the squirrels' tails around his ears;
And, out of all the players I had seen,
His face was quickest through its clay to flash
The passing mood. Though not a muscle stirred,
The very skin of it seemed to flicker and gleam
With little summer lightnings of the soul
At every fleeting fancy. For a man
So quick to bleed at a pin-prick or to leap
Laughing through hell to save a butterfly,
The world was difficult; and perchance he found
In his fantastic games that open road
Which even Will Shakespeare only found at last
In motley and with some wild straws in his hair.

"But "Drawer! drawer!" bellowed Friar Ben,
"Make ready a righteous breakfast while I
preach;—

Tankards of nut-brown ale, and cold roast beef,
Cracknels, old cheese, flaunes, tarts and clotted
cream,

Hath any a wish not circumscribed by these?"

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

"A white-pot custard, for my white-pot queen,"
Cried Kemp, waving his bauble, "mark this, boy,
A white-pot custard for my queen of May,—
She is not here, but that concerns not thee!—
A white-pot Mermaid custard, with a crust,
Lashings of cream, eggs, apple-pulse and spice,
A little sugar, and manchet bread. Away!
Be swift."

And as I bustled to and fro,
The Friar raised his big brown fist again
And preached in mockery of the Puritans
Who thought to strip the moonshine wings from
Mab,
Tear down the May-poles, rout our English games,
And drive all beauty back into the sea.

Then laughter and chatter and clashing tankards
drowned

All but their May-day jollity a-while.

But, as their breakfast ended, and I sank
Gasping upon a bench, there came still more
Poets and players crowding into the room;
And one—I only knew him as Sir John—
Waved a great ballad at Will Kemp and laughed,
"Atonement, Will, atonement!"

"What," groaned Kemp,
"Another penny poet? How many lies

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Does *this* rogue tell? Sir. I have suffered much
From these Melpomenes and strawberry quills,
And think them better at their bloody lines
On *The Blue Lady*. Sir, they set to work
At seven o'clock in the morning, the same hour
That I, myself, that's *Cavaliero* Kemp,
With heels of feather and heart of cork, began
Frolickly footing, from the great Lord Mayor
Of London, tow' rds the worshipful Master Mayor
Of Norwich."

"Nay, Kemp, this is a May-day tune,
A morrice of country rhymes, made by a poet
Who thought it shame so worthy an act as thine
Should wither in oblivion if the Muse
With her Castalian showers could keep it green."
And while the fool nid-nodded all in time,
Sir John, in swinging measure, trolled this tale:—

I

With Georgie Sprat, my overseer, and Thomas
Slye, my tabourer,
And William Bee, my courier, when dawn em-
blazed the skies,
I met a tall young butcher as I danced by little
Sudbury,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Head-master o' morrice-dancers all, high head-
borough of hyes.

By Sudbury, by Sudbury, by little red-roofed Sud-
bury,

He wished to dance a mile with me! I made a
courtly bow:

I fitted him with morrice-bells, with treble, bass, and
tenor bells,

And "*Tickle your tabour, Tom,*" I cried, "we're
going to market now."

And rollicking down the lanes we dashed, and
frolicking up the hills we clashed,

And like a sail behind me flapped his great white
frock a-while,

Till, with a gasp he sank and swore that he could
dance with me no more;

And—over the hedge a milkmaid laughed, *Not
dance with him a mile?*

"You lout!" she laughed, "I'll leave my pail, and
dance with him for cakes and ale!

I'll dance a mile for love," she laughed, "and win
my wager, too.

Your feet are shod and mine are bare; but when
could leather dance on air?

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

A milk-maid's feet can fall as fair and light as
falling dew."

I fitted her with morrice-bells, with treble, bass,
and tenor bells:

The fore-bells, as I linked them at her throat,
how soft they sang!

Green linnets in a golden nest, they chirped and
trembled on her breast,

And, faint as elfin blue-bells, at her nut-brown
ankles rang.

I fitted her with morrice-bells that sweetened into
woodbine bells,

And trembled as I hung them there and crowned
her sunny brow:

"Strike up," she laughed, "my summer king!" And
all her bells began to ring,

And "*Tickle your tabour, Tom,*" I cried, "*we're
going to Sherwood now!*"

When cocks were crowing, and light was growing,
and horns were blowing, and milk-pails
flowing,

We swam thro' waves of emerald gloom along
a chestnut aisle,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Then, up a shining hawthorn-lane, we sailed into the
sun again,

Will Kemp and his companion, his companion
of a mile.

"Truer than most," snarled Kemp, "but mostly lies!
And why does he forget the miry lanes
By Brainford with thick woods on either side,
And the deep holes, where I could find no ease
But skipped up to my waist?" a crackling laugh
Broke from his lips which, if he had not worn
The cap and bells, would scarce have roused the
mirth

Of good Sir John, who roundly echoed it,
Then waved his hand and said, "Nay, but he treats
Your morrice in the spirit of Lucian, Will,
Who thought that dancing was no mushroom
growth,

But sprung from the beginning of the world
When Love persuaded earth, air, water, fire,
And all the jarring elements to move
In measure. Right to the heart of it, my lad,
The song goes, though the skin mislike you so."

"Nay, an there's more of it, I'll sing it, too!
'Tis a fine tale, Sir John, I have it by heart,
Although 'tis lies throughout." Up leapt Will
Kemp,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

And crouched and swayed, and swung his bauble
round,
Marking the measure as they trolled the tale,
Chanting alternately, each answering each.

II

THE FOOL

The tabour fainted far away behind us, but her feet
that day
They beat a rosier measure o'er the fairy-circled
green.

SIR JOHN

And o'er a field of buttercups, a field of lambs and
buttercups,
We danced along a cloth of gold, a summer king
and queen!

THE FOOL

And straying we went, and swaying we went, with
lambkins round us playing we went;
Her face uplift to drink the sun, and not for me
her smile.
We danced, a king and queen of May, upon a
fleeting holy-day,
But O, she'd won her wager, my companion of a
mile!

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

SIR JOHN

Her rosy lips they never spoke, though every rosy
footfall broke

The dust, the dust to Eden-bloom; and, past the
throbbing blue,

All ordered to her rhythmic feet, the stars were
dancing with my sweet,

And all the world a morrice-dance!

THE FOOL

She knew not; but I knew!

Love, like Amphion with his lyre, made all the
elements conspire

To build His world of music. All in rhythmic
rank and file,

I saw them in their cosmic dance, catch hands across,
retire, advance,

For me and my companion, my companion of a
mile!

SIR JOHN

The little leaves on every tree, the rivers winding to
the sea,

The swinging tides, the wheeling winds, the
rolling heavens above,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Around the May-pole Igdrasil, they worked the
Morrice-master's will,
Persuaded into measure by the all-creative Love.

That hour I saw, from depth to height, this
wilderling universe unite!
The lambs of God around us and His passion in
every flower!

THE FOOL

His grandeur in the dust, His dust a blaze of
blinding majesty,
And all His immortality in one poor mortal hour.

And Death was but a change of key in Life the
golden melody,
And Time became Eternity, and Heaven a fleeting
smile;
For all was each and each was all, and all a wedded
unity,
Her heart in mine, and mine in my companion of
a mile.

Thwack! thwack! He whirled his bauble round
about,
"This fellow beats them all," he cried, "the worst
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THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Those others wrote was that I hopped from York
To Paris with a mortar on my head.

This fellow sends me leaping through the clouds
To buss the moon! The best is yet to come.

Strike up, Sir John! Ha! Ha! You know no more"

Kemp leapt upon a table. "Clear the way,"

He cried, and with a great stamp of his foot

And a wild crackling laugh, drew all to hark.

"With hey and ho, through thick and thin,

The hobby-horse is forgotten.

But I must finish what I begin,

Tho' all the roads be rotten.

"By all those twenty thousand chariots, Ben,
Hear this true tale they shall! Now, let me see,
Where was Will Kemp? Bussing the moon's pale
mouth?

Ah, yes!" He crouched above the listening throng,—

"*Good as a play*," I heard one whispering quean,—

And, waving his bauble, shuffling with his feet

In a dance that marked the time, he sank his voice

As if to breathe great secrets, and so sang:—

III

At Melford town, at Melford town, at little grey-
roofed Melford town,

A long mile from Sudbury, upon the village green,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

We danced into a merry rout of country-folk that
skipt about

A hobby-horse, a May-pole, and a laughing white-
pot queen.

They thronged about us as we stayed, and there I
gave my sunshine maid

An English crown for cakes and ale—her dancing
was so true!

And "Nay," she said, "I danced my mile for love!"

I answered with a smile,

"'Tis but a silver token, lass, thou'st won that
wager, too."

I took my leash of morrice-bells, my treble, bass,
and tenor bells,

They pealed like distant marriage-bells! And
up came William Bee

With Georgie Spratt, my overseer, and Thomas
Slye, my tabourer,

"Farewell," she laughed, and vanished with a
Suffolk courtesie.

I leapt away to Rockland, and from Rockland on to
Hingham,

From Hingham on to Norwich, sirs! I hardly
heard a-while

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

The throngs that followed after, with their shouting
and their laughter,
For a shadow danced beside me, my companion
of a mile!

At Norwich, by St. Giles his gate, I entered, and
the Mayor in state,
With all the rosy knights and squires for twenty
miles about,
With trumpets and with minstrelsy, was waiting
there to welcome me;
And, as I skipt into the street, the City raised a
shout.

They gave me what I did not seek! I fed on
roasted swans a week!
They pledged me in their malmsey, and they
lined me warm with ale!
They sleeked my skin with red-deer pies, and all
that runs and swims and flies;
But, through the clashing wine-cups, O, I heard
her clanking pail.

And, rising from his crimson chair, the worshipful
and portly Mayor
Bequeathed me forty shillings every year that I
should live,

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

With five good angels in my hand that I could drink
while I could stand!

They gave me golden angels! What I lacked they
could not give.

They made Will Kemp, thenceforward, sirs,
Freeman of Marchaunt Venturers!

They hoped that I would dance again from
Norwich up to York;

Then they asked me, all together, had I met with
right May weather,

And they praised my heels of feather, and my
heart, my heart of cork.

* * * * *

As I came home by Sudbury, by little red-roofed
Sudbury,

I waited for my bare-foot maid, among her satin
kine.

I heard a peel of wedding bells, of treble, bass, and
tenor bells:

"Ring well," I cried, "this bridal morn! You
soon shall ring for mine!"

I found her foot-prints in the grass, just where she
stood and saw me pass,

I stood within her own sweet field and waited for
my May.

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

I laughed. The dance has turned about! I stand
within: she'll pass without,
And—*down the road the wedding came, the road
I danced that day!*

*I saw the wedding folk go by, with laughter and
minstrelsy,
I gazed across her own sweet hedge, I caught her
happy smile,
I saw the tall young butcher pass to little red-roofed
Sudbury,
His bride upon his arm, my lost companion of a
mile.*

Down from his table leapt the motley Fool.
His bladder bounced from head to ducking head,
His crackling laugh rang high,—“Sir John, I danced
In February, and the song says May!
A fig for all your poets, liars all!
Away to Fenchurch Street, lasses and lads,
They hold high revel there this May-day morn.
Away!” The mad-cap throng echoed the cry.
He drove them with his bauble through the door;
Then, as the last gay kerchief fluttered out,
He gave one little sharp sad lingering cry
As of a lute-string breaking. He turned back
And threw himself along a low dark bench;

THE COMPANION OF A MILE

His jingling cap was crumpled in his fist,
And, as he lay there, all along Cheapside
The happy voices of his comrades rang:—

Out of the woods we'll dance and sing
Under the morning-star of Spring,
Into the town with our fresh boughs
And knock at every sleeping house,
Not sighing,
Or crying,
Though Love knows no denying!
Then, round your summer queen and king
Come, young lovers, dance and sing,
Dance and sing!

His motley shoulders heaved. I touched his arm,
"What ails you, sir?" He raised his thin white face,
Wet with the May-dew still. A few stray petals
Clung in his tangled hair. He leapt to his feet,
"'Twas February, but I danced, boy, danced
In May! Can you do this?" Forward he bent
Over his feet, and shuffled it, heel and toe,
Out of the Mermaid, singing his old song—

A-maying,
A-playing,
For Love knows no gain-saying!
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THE COMPANION OF A MILE

Wisdom trips not? Even so,—
Come, young lovers, trip and go,
Trip and go.

Five minutes later, over the roaring Strand,
“*Chorus!*” I heard him crow, and half the town
Reeled into music under his crimson comb.

ALFRED NOYES

THE COURTIN'

GOD makes sech nights, all white an' still
Fur 'z you can look or listen,
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
An' peeked in thru' the winder,
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
'Ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
With half a cord o' wood in—
There warn't no stoves (till comfort died)
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
An' in amongst 'em rusted

THE COURTIN'

The old queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young
Fetcht back from Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full ez rosy agin
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessed cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1
Clear grit an' human natur',
None couldn't quicker pitch a ton
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
He'd squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—
All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
All crinkly like curled maple,
The side she breshed felt full o' sun
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

THE COURTIN'

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
Ez hisn in the choir;
My! When he made Ole Hunderd ring,
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
When her new meetin' bonnet
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*
She seemed to 've got a new soul,
For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot an' knowed it, too,
A-raspin' on the scraper,—
All ways to once her feelins flew
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Some doubtful o' the sekle,
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
Ez though she wished him funder,

THE COURTIN'

An' on her apples kep' to work,
Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"
"Wal—no—I come dasignin' "—
"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

To say why gals act so or so,
Or don't 'ould be presumin';
Mebbe to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t'other,
An' on which one he felt the wust
He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin;"
Says she, "Think likely, mister:"
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
An'—Wal, he up an' kisst her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips
Huldy sot pale ez ashes.
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
An teary roun' the lashes.

THE COURTIN'

For she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snow-hid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin'
Till mother see how metters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
An' all I know is they was cried
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE;
OR, THE WONDERFUL
"ONE-HOSS SHAY"

A Logical Story

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss
shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The cross bars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through,"—
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wander, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned grey,
Deacon and deaconers dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

Eighteen hundred;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;—
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and fifty-five.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact there's nothing that keeps it youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

First of November,—the Earthquake-day—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavour of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—

And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
—What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once, and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

THE Dean of Santiago on his mule
Rode quick the Guadalquivir banks along,
He had no eye the veiling eve to love;
No ear to listen for the bird's late song.

Gold mist and purple of the setting sun,
Rose lapping wave and linnet's low good-night,
The crags that sat the hills like kings enthroned,
All heather-crowned, for him had no delight.

His roaming glances go from east to west,
Climb quick before him, find amid the rocks
A hut; he hastens, casting free his mule,
And with no gentle hand the door he knocks.

"Now who would enter?" "I, the Dean, let pass."
He sees the tenant working at his books,
"And what can I, a student, poor, remote,
Do for the Dean?" he answers to his looks.

"Teach me your magic, so I learn to slave
The hiding creatures from the circling air

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

And bid them speak. Blow from the crystal globe
The mists that hold my future clouded there."

"What? Share my magic! But it were not well:
The Church such study doth renounce and shun."
The Dean with some rebuke now makes reply,
"My law I own in this—let it be done."

"Then you must eat before the task is set:
Well, when you finish; since you eager are
We should begin. Nay, this I do insist,
For you are weary, having travelled far.

"Hussein!"—he bids the servant by his side:—
"Go tell the cook a guest with me will dine;
And let two capons be prepared by him,
And two gold cups of my most famous wine.

"Tie up the straying mule. And now begone;
The Dean within an hour will dine with me."
The servant goes, and lets the curtain fall,
And darkness floods the room in mystery.

Soft wings brush past the Dean, strange sounds float
up,
Like tongues that have no words, through the
still air.

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

"What say you?" leans the Dean with eager ears
And grasping hands that find no substance there.

"What are you?" But the magic mist is gone,
Hussein has entered, and the light let through.
"A message for the Dean." He reads in haste:
"The Bishop being dead, we send for you."

The Dean arises full of pompous pride:
"If I am Bishop, I shall not forget
My student-teacher, and shall bid you come
To teach that lore I leave with much regret."
* * * * *

A month has passed—the Bishop in his room
Receives the student bowing at his feet,
With some delight, and says he has prepared
A secret chamber where they can repeat

Their former study, and so follow it.
The student, smiling gratitude, doth speak,
"I beg a boon of you," and hears reply,
"I make a promise, and I never break.

"The boon is yours." The student bows again:
"I have a son, a gentle youth and good,
Who seeks the Church." The Bishop lifts his eyes,
"To him I hold the hand of brotherhood.

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

"Soon I shall call him, but to-day my time
Is thick with thought, because a rumour came
The great Archbishop at the door of Death
Doth knock—the air is heavy with my name."

* * * * *

A year goes by, and the Archbishop wakes,
Springs from his bed, and "Hussein, you!" he
cries,
To find strange eyes upon him. Bows the Moor,
"My master waits your message," he replies.

"Then bid him enter, take up his abode
Within my Palace, wait until I come.
To-day my mind is busy with such things
That bid me to all other thoughts be dumb.

"Go, tell your master, he will understand,
The Cardinal is dying. What! His son
Begs for a hope! What better hope than this—
The Cardinal is dying?—I have done."

* * * * *

The Cardinal upon his throne reclines,
And at his feet the student, bowing low,
"A boon, my lord, a boon—let me begone.
Back to my solitude I fain would go.

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

"Here comes the world between me and my art,
My soul is weary and my body ill,
My study broken, and my time misspent;
You have forgotten what was once your will."

"Nay, friend," the other cries, "you are unjust;
My heart is with you, and I pray you stay
Until my mind breaks from the bonds of care
That hold it now—a little more delay."

"Have you not heard the rumour that goes forth—
The Pope is dying? Who shall fill his chair
When he has passed all sainted to the grave?
Peace, friend, until the occupant is there."

The Pope within his chamber, deep in thought
Hears at his door a knock, and saying, "Come,"
The student bends before him with reproach,
"From all my knowledge you have picked no
crumb."

"O Holiness! we had no feast of lore,
But fortune came to you beneath my star,
Then let me go, since me you do not wish,
Now you are greater than all others are."

"Old man," the Pope replied, "I let you go
In pity of your age and fading hair,

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

Whom I should prison in my dungeon deep
For all the evil magic you did dare.

“Reveal to me, who only sought your side
To find your wickedness and give it light.
Go back into your wilderness, but leave
Your ways of darkness. Get you from my sight.”

“O Holiness,” the student bent and said,
“My son for whom you promised of your aid;”
“Begone!” the Pope replied; “think not I should
By son of you the Christian Church degrade.”

“I go, great Holiness, without a fee
For all my time; now but one boon I hold;
To break my fast, I hunger as I go—
Give me one meal, the way is long and cold.”

Now spake the Pope in anger, struck the bell,
“I call my guards to put this beggar out.”
The door swings open, Hussein enters quick,
“What, you again?”—he rises in his doubt.

He gazes round, his Palace slips away,
A shadow-palace floating from his eyes.
“What ho! my guards,” his voice falls into tears,
He rubs his lids to rid them of surprise.

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

"Hussein," the student smiles, "go tell the cook
One capon only, and one cup of wine,
And bring this ingrate's mule beside the door—
The Dean of Santiago will not dine."

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

THE DEMON SHIP

TWAS off the Wash the sun went down—the
 sea looked black and grim,
For stormy clouds with murky fleece were mustering
 at the brim;
Titanic shades! enormous gloom!—as if the solid
 night
Of Erebus rose suddenly to seize upon the light!
It was a time for mariners to bear a wary eye,
With such a dark conspiracy between the sea and
 sky!

Down went my helm, close reefed, the tack held
 freely in my hand,
With ballast snug, I put about and scudded for the
 land;
Loud hissed the sea beneath her lee—my little boat
 flew fast,
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon
 the blast.

Lord! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining
 sail!

THE DEMON SHIP

What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce
assaults of hail!
What darksome caverns yawned before! what
jagged steeps behind!
Like battle-steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing
in the wind,
Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the
chase,
But where it sank another rose and galloped in its
place;
As black as night—they turned to white, and cast
against the cloud
A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturned a sailor's
shroud:—
Still flew my boat; alas! alas! her course was nearly
run!
Behold yon fatal billow rise—ten billows heaped in
one!
With fearful speed the dreary mass came rolling,
rolling fast,
As if the scooping sea contained one only wave at
last;
Still on it came, with horrid roar, a swift pursuing
grave;
It seemed as though some cloud had turned its huge-
ness to a wave!
Its briny sleet began to beat beforehand in my face—

THE DEMON SHIP

I felt the rearward keel begin to climb its swelling
base!

I saw its alpine hoary head impending over mine!
Another pulse—and down it rushed—an avalanche
of brine!

Brief pause had I on God to cry, or think of wife
or home;

The waters closed—and when I shrieked, I shrieked
below the foam!

Beyond that rush I have no hint of any after-deed—
For I was tossing on the waste as senseless as a
weed.

* * * * *

“Where am I? in the breathing world, or in the
world of death?”

With sharp and sudden pang I drew another birth
of breath;

My eyes drank in a doubtful light, my ears a
doubtful sound—

And was that ship a *real* ship whose tackle seemed
around?

A moon, as if the earthly moon, was shining up aloft,
But were those beams the very beams that I have
seen so oft?

A face that mocked the human face, before me
watched alone;

THE DEMON SHIP

But were those eyes the eyes of man that looked
against my own?

Oh! never may the moon again disclose me such a
sight

As met my gaze, when first I looked, on that
accurséd night!

I've seen a thousand horrid shapes begot of fierce
extremes

Of fever; and most frightful things have haunted
in my dreams—

Hyenas—cats—blood-loving bats—and apes with
hateful stare—

Pernicious snakes, and shaggy bulls—the lion, and
she-bear—

Strong enemies, with Judas looks, of treachery and
spite—

Detested features, hardly dimmed and banished by
the light!

Pale-sheeted ghosts, with gory locks upstarting from
their tombs—

All phantasies and images that flit in midnight
glooms—

Hags, goblins, demons, lemures, have made me all
aghast,—

But nothing like that *Grimly One* who stood beside
the mast!

THE DEMON SHIP

His cheek was black—his brow was black—his eyes
and hair as dark,

His hand was black, and where it touched, it left a
sable mark;

His throat was black, his vest the same, and when
I looked beneath,

His breast was black—all, all was black, except his
grinning teeth,

His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric
slaves!

Oh, horror! e'en the ship was black that ploughed
the inky waves!

"Alas!" I cried, "for love of truth and blessed
mercy's sake,

Where am I? in what dreadful ship? upon what
dreadful lake?

What shape is that, so very grim, and black as any
coal?

It is Mahound, the Evil One, and he has gained my
soul!

Oh, mother dear! my tender nurse: dear meadows
that beguiled

My happy days, when I was yet a little sinless
child—

My mother dear—my native fields I never more
shall see:

THE DEMON SHIP

I'm sailing in the Devil's Ship, upon the Devil's
Sea!"

Loud laughed that Sable Mariner, and loudly in
return

His sooty crew sent forth a laugh that rang from
stem to stern—

A dozen pair of grimey cheeks were crumpled on
the nonce—

As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out at
once:

A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoyed the merry
fit,

With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like Demons
of the Pit.

They crowed their fill, and then the Chief made
answer for the whole:—

"Our skins," said he, "are black, ye see, because we
carry coals;

You'll find your mother sure enough, and see your
native fields—

For this here ship has picked you up—the *Mary
Ann* of Shields!"

THOMAS HOOD

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

*Showing How He Went Farther Than He Intended
and Came Safe Home Again*

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

Tomorrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,
Myself and children three,

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said:
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'er joyed was he to find
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folks so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in,

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

When Betty screaming came downstairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well-brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit up right,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Till loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
"'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight;
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he knew the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

“The dinner waits, and we are tired;”
Said Gilpin—“So am I!”

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there!
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender’s
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

“What news? what news? your tidings tell!
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come
Or why you come at all?”

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come,
And, if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here—
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain:
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post boy at his heels,
The post boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,

DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

With post boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:

“Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-man thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he did get up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the King!
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see!

WILLIAM COWPER

THE DUEL

THE gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
*(I was n't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)*

The gingham dog went "Bow-bow-bow!"
And the calico cat replied "Mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
*(Now mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)*

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"

THE DUEL

But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfulest way you ever saw
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
*(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)*

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
*(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know!)*
EUGENE FIELD

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

TURN, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

“For here, forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds immeasurably spread
Seem lengthening as I go.”

“Forbear, my son,” the hermit cries,
“To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

“Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

“Then turn to-night, and freely share
What'er my cell bestows;

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

My rushy couch, and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

“No flocks that range the valley free
To slaughter I condemn:
Taught by that power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.

“But from the mountain’s grassy side
A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring.

“Then pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”

Soft as the dew from heav’n descends,
His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure
The lonely mansion lay;
A refuge to the neighbouring poor
And strangers led astray.

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Required a master's care;
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Received the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The hermit trimmed his little fire,
And cheered his pensive guest;

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily pressed and smiled;
And, skilled in legendary lore,
The lingering hours beguiled.

Around in sympathetic mirth
Its tricks the kitten tries;
The cricket chirrup in the hearth;
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's woe;
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the hermit spied,
With answering care oppressed;

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

"And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
"The sorrows of thy breast?

"From better habitation spurned,
Reluctant dost thou rove;
Or grieve for friendship unreturned,
Or unregarded love?

"Alas! the joys that fortune brings
Are trifling, and decay;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?

"And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one's jest:
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

"For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex," he said;
But, while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betrayed.

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

Surprised, he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view;
Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spreads alarms;
The lovely stranger stands confessed
A maid in all her charms.

"And, ah! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn," she cried;
"Whose feet unhallowed thus intrude
Where heaven and you reside.

"But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

"My father lived beside the Tyne,
A wealthy lord was he;
And all his wealth was marked as mine,
He had but only me.

To win me from his tender arms
Unnumbered suitors came;

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt or feigned a flame.

Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove;
Amongst the rest young Edwin bowed,
But never talked of love.

"In humble, simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

"And when beside me in the dale
He carolled lays of love;
His breath lent fragrance to the gale,
And music to the grove.

"The blossoms opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

"The dew, the blossoms on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but woe to me!
Their inconstancy was mine.

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

“For still I tried each fickle art,
 Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touched my heart,
 I triumphed in his pain.

“Till quite dejected with my scorn,
 He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
 In secret, where he died.

“But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
 And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
 And stretch me where he lay.

“And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
 I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
 And so for him will I.”

“Forbid it, heaven!” the hermit cried,
 And clasped her to his breast;
The wondering fair one turned to chide,
 'Twas Edwin's self that prest.

“Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
 My charmer, turn to see

EDWIN AND ANGELINA

Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

"Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign;
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that's mine?

"No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends the constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

FYTTE THE FIRST: *Wherein it shall be shown
how the Truth is too mighty a Drug for such
as be of feeble temper.*

THE King was sick. His cheek was red
And his eye was clear and bright;
He ate and drank with a kingly zest,
And peacefully snored at night.

But he said he was sick, and a king should know,
And doctors came by the score.
They did not cure him. He cut off their heads
And sent to the schools for more.

At last two famous doctors came,
And one was as poor as a rat,—
He had passed his life in studious toil,
And never found time to grow fat.

The other had never looked in a book;
His patients gave no trouble:—

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

If they recovered they paid him well,
If they died, their heirs paid double.

Together they looked at the royal tongue,
As the King on his couch reclined;
In succession they thumped his august chest,
But no trace of disease could find.

The old sage said, "You're as sound as a nut."
"Hang him up!" roared the King in a gale—
In a ten-knot gale of royal rage;
The other leech grew a shade pale;

But he pensively rubbed his sagacious nose,
And thus his prescription ran,—
*"The King will be well, if he sleeps one night
In the Shirt of a Happy Man."*

FYTTE THE SECOND: *Tells of the search for the
Shirt, and how it was nigh found, but was not,
for reasons which are said or sung.*

Wide o'er the realm the couriers rode,
And fast their horses ran,
And many they saw, and to many they spoke,
But they found no Happy Man.

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

They found poor men who would fain be rich
And rich who thought they were poor;
And men who twisted their waists in stays,
And women that short hose wore.

They saw two men by the roadside sit,
And both bemoaned their lot;
For one had buried his wife, he said,
And the other one had not.

At last they came to a village gate,
A beggar lay whistling there;
He whistled and sang and laughed and rolled
On the grass in the soft June air.

The weary couriers paused and looked
At the scamp so blithe and gay;
And one of them said, "Heaven save you, friend,
You seem to be happy to-day."

"Oh yes, fair sirs!" the rascal laughed,
And his voice rang free and glad,
"An idle man has so much to do
That he never has time to be sad."

"This is our man," the courier said;
"Our luck has led us aright.

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

I will give you a hundred ducats, friend,
For the loan of your shirt to-night."

The merry blackguard lay back on the grass,
And laughed till his face was black;
"I would do it, God wot," and he roared with the
fun,
"But I haven't a shirt to my back."

FYTTE THE THIRD: *Showing how His Majesty
the King came at last to sleep in a Happy
Man's Shirt.*

Each day to the King the reports came in
Of his unsuccessful spies,
And the sad panorama of human woes
Passed daily under his eyes.

And he grew ashamed of his useless life,
And his maladies hatched in gloom;
He opened his windows and let in the air
Of the free heaven into his room.

And out he went in the world and toiled
In his own appointed way;
And the people blessed him, the land was glad,
And the King was well and gay.

JOHN HAY

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

A Midsummer Legend

“**A**ND where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?”

“I’ve been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer-night to see!”

“And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?”

“I saw the glad sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow.”

“And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?”

“I heard the drops of the water made,
And the ears of the green corn fill.”

“Oh! tell me all, my Mary,
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night, on the Caldon Low.”

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

“Then take me on your knee, mother;
And listen, mother of mine.
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine.

And their harp-strings rung so merrily
To their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the words of their talking
Were merrier far than all.”

“And what were the words, my Mary,
That then you heard them say?”
“I’ll tell you all, my mother;
But let me have my way.

Some of them played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;
‘And this,’ they said, ‘shall speedily turn
The poor old miller’s mill:

For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man will the miller be
At dawning of the day.

Oh! the miller, how he will laugh
When he sees the mill-dam rise!

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

The jolly old miller, how he will laugh
Till the tears fill both his eyes !'

And some they seized the little winds
That sounded over the hill;
And each put a horn unto his mouth
And blew both loud and shrill:

'And there,' they said, 'the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And they shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind, old widow's corn.

Oh! the poor, blind widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be blithe enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands tall and strong.'

And some they brought the brown lint-seed,
And flung it down from the Low;
'And this,' they said, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow.

'Oh! the poor lame weaver,
How will he laugh outright,
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

And then outspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin;
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.'

'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another;
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother.'

With that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon Low
There was no one left but me.

And all on the top of the Caldon Low
The mists were cold and grey,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

But, coming down from the hill-top,
I heard afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how the wheel did go.

And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, were seen

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

The yellow ears of the mildewed corn,
All standing stout and green.

And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were sprung;
But I met the weaver at his gate,
With the good news on his tongue.

Now this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, prythee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be.

MARY HOWITT

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

A Ballad

THE lawns were dry in Euston park;
 (Here truth inspires my tale)—
The lonely foot path, still and dark,
 Led over hill and dale.

Benighted was an ancient dame,
 And fearful haste she made
To gain the vale of Fakenham,
 And hail its willow shade.

Her footsteps knew no idle stops,
 But followed faster still;
And echoed to the darksome copse
 That whispered on the hill;

Where clamorous rooks, yet scarcely hushed,
 Bespoke a peopled shade;
And many a wing the foliage brushed,
 And hovering circuits made.

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

The dappled herd of grazing deer
That sought the shades by day,
Now started from her path with fear,
And gave the stranger way.

Darker it grew; and darker fears
Came o'er her troubled mind;
When now, a short quick step she hears
Came patting close behind.

She turned, it stopped!—nought could she see
Upon the gloomy plain!
But as she strove the sprite to flee,
She heard the same again.

Now terror seized her quaking frame:
For, where the path was bare,
The trotting ghost kept on the same!
She muttered many a prayer.

Yet once again, amidst her fright,
She tried what sight could do;
When through the cheating glooms of night,
A Monster stood in view.

Regardless of what e'er she felt
It followed down the plain!

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

She owned her sins, and down she knelt,
And said her prayers again.

Then on she sped: and hope grew strong,
The white park-gate in view;
Which pushing hard, so long it swung
That ghost and all pressed through.

Loud fell the gate against the post!
Her heart-strings like to crack:
For much she feared the grisly ghost
Would leap upon her back.

Still on, pat, pat, the goblin went,
As it had done before:
Her strength and resolution spent,
She fainted at the door.

Out came her husband, much surprised:
Out came her daughter dear:
Good-natured souls! all unadvised
Of what they had to fear.

The candle's gleam pierced through the night,
Some short space o'er the green;
And there the little trotting sprite
Distinctly might be seen.

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

An *ass's foal* had lost its dam
Within the spacious park;
And simple as the playful lamb,
Had followed in the dark.

No goblin he; no imp of sin;
No crimes had ever known;
They took the shaggy stranger in,
And reared him as their own.

His little hoofs would rattle round
Upon the cottage floor:
The matron learned to love the sound
That frightened her before.

A favourite the ghost became:
And 'twas his fate to thrive:
And long he lived, and spread his fame,
And kept the joke alive.

For many a laugh went through the vale;
And some conviction too:—
Each thought some other goblin tale,
Perhaps, was just as true.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD

THE FALL

WHO does not know that dreadful gulf, where
Niagara falls,
Where eagle unto eagle screams, to vulture vulture
calls;
Where down beneath, Despair and Death in liquid
darkness grope,
And upward, on the foam there shines a rainbow
without Hope;
While, hung with clouds of Fear and Doubt, the
unreturning wave
Suddenly gives an awful plunge, like life into the
grave;
And many a hapless mortal there hath dived to bale
or bliss;
One—only one—hath ever lived to rise from that
abyss!
Oh, Heaven! it turns me now to ice, with chill of
fear extreme,
To think of my frail bark adrift on that tumultous
stream!
In vain with desperate sinews, strung by love of life
and light,

THE FALL

I urged that coffin, my canoe, against the current's
might:

On—on—still on—direct for doom, the river rushed
in force,

And fearfully the stream of Time raced with it in its
course.

My eyes I closed, I dared not look the way towards
the goal;

But still I viewed the horrid close, and dreamt it in
my soul.

Plainly, as through transparent lids, I saw the
fleeting shore,

And lofty trees, like winged things, flit by for
evermore;

Plainly,—but with no prophet sense—I heard the
sullen sound,

The torrent's voice—and felt the mist, like death-
sweat gathering round.

O agony! O life! My home! and those that made
it sweet:

Ere I could pray, the torrent lay beneath my very
feet,

With frightful whirl, more swift than thought, I
passed the dizzy edge,

Bound after bound, with hideous bruise, I dashed
from ledge to ledge,

THE FALL

From crag to crag,—in speechless pain,—from mid-
night deep to deep;
I did not die,—but anguish stunned my senses into
sleep.
How long entranced, or whither dived, no clue I
have to find:
At last the gradual light of life came dawning o'er
my mind;
And through my brain there thrilled a cry,—a cry
as shrill as bird's,
Of vulture or of eagle kind, but this was set to
words:—
“It's Edgar Huntley in his cap and nightgown, I
declares!
He's been a-walking in his sleep, and pitched all
down the stairs!”

THOMAS HOOD

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet.
In a voice that she will know:
“Margaret! Margaret!”
Children’s voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear;
Children’s voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away!
This way, this way!
“Mother dear, we cannot stay.”
The wild, white horses foam and fret.
Margaret! Margaret!

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come dear children, come away down;
Call no more.
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down.
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts ranged all round;
Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green
sea.

She said; "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore today.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
I said; "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
caves."

She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the
bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled
town.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was
still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with
rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear;
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more.
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down.
Down to the depths of the sea.
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully
Hark, what she sings; "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy.
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun."
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold, strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

 Come away, away children,
Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she.
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow;
When clear falls the moonlight;
When spring-tides are low:
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom:
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

KING Francis was a hearty king, and loved a
royal sport,
And one day, as his lions fought, sat looking on the
court;
The nobles filled the benches, and the ladies in their
pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with
one for whom he sighed,
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning
show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal
beasts below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid laughing
jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a
wind went with their paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled
on one another;
Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a
thunderous smother;

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

The bloody foam above the bars came whisking
through the air;
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better
here than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous
lively dame
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which
always seemed the same;
She thought, the Count, my lover, is brave as brave
can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his
love of me;
King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is
divine;
I'll drop my glove to prove his love; great glory
will be mine.

She dropped her glove to prove his love, then
looked at him and smiled,
He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions
wild:
The leap was quick, return was quick, he has
regained the place,
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in
the lady's face.

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

"By God!" said Francis, "rightly done!" and he
rose from where he sat;
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task
like that."

LEIGH HUNT

GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening
Maids hear the goblins cry:
“Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy,
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,

GOBLIN MARKET

Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy."

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes.
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
"We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits.
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry, thirsty roots?"
"Come buy," call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
"Oh," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,
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GOBLIN MARKET

You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds' weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie: "No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes, and ran.
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,

GOBLIN MARKET

One like a ratel tumbled hurry-skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together;
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."

When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown

GOBLIN MARKET

Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her;
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisked-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purred,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin," still for "Pretty Polly;"—
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
"Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin.
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answered all together.
"Buy from us with a golden curl."

GOBLIN MARKET

She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red.
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice,
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more,
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore,
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel-stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings;
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of Goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers

GOBLIN MARKET

Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low;
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so."
"Nay, hush," said Laura;
"Nay, hush, my sister.
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more;" and kissed her.
"Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,

GOBLIN MARKET

Pellucid grapes without one seed;
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forebore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest;
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning,
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie;
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,

GOBLIN MARKET

Aired and set to right the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came.
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homewards, said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

GOBLIN MARKET

And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill;
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words;
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look.
You should not loiter longer at this brook.
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark;
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights, and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

GOBLIN MARKET

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
“Come buy our fruits, come buy.”
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruits?
Must she no more that succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life drooped from the root.
She said not one word in her heart’s sore ache;
But peering thro’ the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
“Come buy, come buy;”—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen.
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn

GOBLIN MARKET

To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
'And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook;
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care,
Yet not to share.
She night and morning

GOBLIN MARKET

Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:"—
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest Winter-time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter-time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door;
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse,
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with lumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook,
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

GOBLIN MARKET

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel—and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry.
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her.
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers and plates;
“Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,

GOBLIN MARKET

Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
"Give me much and many,"—
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,"
They answered grinning.
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry.
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,

GOBLIN MARKET

Cheer you and rest with us."

"Thank you," said Lizzie; "but one waits
At home alone for me.

So without further parleying,

If you will not sell me any

Of your fruits, though much and many,

Give me back my silver penny

I tossed you for a fee."

They began to scratch their pates,

No longer wagging, purring,

But visibly demurring,

Grunting and snarling.

One called her proud,

Cross-grained, uncivil;

Their tones waxed loud,

Their looks were evil.

Lashing their tails

They trod and hustled her,

Elbowed and jostled her,

Clawed with their nails,

Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,

Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,

Twisted her hair out by the roots,

Stamped upon her tender feet,

Held her hands and squeezed their fruits

Against her mouth to make her eat.

GOBLIN MARKET

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary, roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree,
White with blossoms honey-sweet,
Sore beset by wasp and bee;
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleagured by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in,
But laughed in heart to feel the drip

GOBLIN MARKET

Of juice that syrugged all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin
And streaked her neck, which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle,
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse.
But not one goblin skurried after,

GOBLIN MARKET

Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew,
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light, like mine, be hidden,
Your young life, like mine, be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"

GOBLIN MARKET

She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her.
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth
Shaking with aguish fear and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast
Writhing as one possessed, she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at
her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there,

GOBLIN MARKET

And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name.
Ha! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife.
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped watersprout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night-long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves;
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,

GOBLIN MARKET

And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie, but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time.
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town)—
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote.
Then joining hands to little hands

GOBLIN MARKET

Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He uttered rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbours;
And blessed herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;

THE GOOSE

Until the grave churchwarden doffed,
The parson smirked and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white goose laid
It clacked and cackled louder.

It cluttered here, it chuckled there;
It stirred the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow chair,
And hurled the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then waxed her anger stronger.
"Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelped the cur, and yawled the cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And filled the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounded all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

THE GOOSE

He took the goose upon his arm,
He uttered words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind cleared the larder:

And while on all sides, breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

ALFRED TENNYSON

THE GUERDON

SOOTHED by the fountain's drowsy murmuring—

Or was it by the west-wind's indolent wing?—
The grim court-poet fell asleep one day
In the lord's chamber, when chance brought that way
The Princess Margaret with a merry train
Of damosels and ladies—flippant, vain
Court-butterflies—midst whom fair Margaret
Swayed like a rathe and slender lily set
In rustling leaves, for all her drapery
Was green and gold, and lovely as could be.

Midway in hall the fountain rose and fell,
Filling a listless Naiad's outstretched shell
And weaving rainbows in the shifting light.
Upon the carven friezes, left and right,
Was pictured Pan asleep beside his reed.
In this place all things seemed asleep, indeed,
The hook-billed parrot on his pendent ring,
Sitting high shouldered, half forgot to swing;
The wind scarce stirred the hangings at the door,

THE GUERDON

And from the silken arras evermore
Yawned drowsy dwarfs with satyr's face and hoof.

A forest of gold pillars propped the roof,
And like one slim gold pillar overthrown,
The sunlight through a great stained window shone
And lay across the body of Alain.

You would have thought, perchance, the man was
slain:

As if the checkered column in its fall
Had caught and crushed him, he lay dead to all.
The parrot's gray bead eye as good as said,
Unclosing viciously, "The clown is dead."
A dragon-fly in narrowing circles neared,
And lit, secure, upon the dead man's beard,
Then spread its iris vans in quick dismay,
And into the blue summer sped away!

Little was his of outward grace to win
The eyes of maids, but white the soul within.
Misshaped and hideous to look upon
Was this man, dreaming in the noontide sun,
With sunken eyes and winter-whitened hair,
And sallow cheeks deep seamed with thought and
care.

And so the laughing ladies of the court,
Coming upon him suddenly, stopped short,

THE GUERDON

And shrunk together with a nameless dread;
Some, but fear held them, would have turned and
fled,

Seeing the uncouth figure lying there.

But Princess Margaret, with her heavy hair
From out its diamond fillet rippling down,
Slipped from the group, and plucking back her gown
With white left hand, stole softly to his side—
The fair court gossips staring, curious-eyed,
Half mockingly. A little while she stood,
Finger on lip; then, with the agile blood
Climbing her cheek, and silken lashes wet—
She scarce knew what vague pity or regret
Wet them—she stooped, and for a moment's space
Her golden tresses touched the sleeper's face.
Then she stood straight, as lily on its stem,
But hearing her ladies titter, turned on them
Her great queen's eyes, grown black with scornful
frown—

Great eyes that looked the shallow women down.
“Nay, not for love” one rosy palm she laid
Softly against her bosom—“as I'm a maid!
Full well I know what cruel things you say
Of this and that, but hold your peace today.
I pray you think no evil thing of this.
Nay, not for love's sake did I give the kiss,

THE GUERDON

Not for his beauty who's not fair nor young,
But for the songs which those mute lips have sung!"

That was a right brave princess, one, I hold,
Worthy to wear a crown of beaten gold.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokern, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

At Duffield, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-
chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the midst at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent
back

For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay
spur!

"Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
"We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick
wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering
knees,

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Loos and past Tongres, 'no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like
 chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his
 roan
Rolled neck and crop over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her
 fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without
 peer;

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad
or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of
wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.

ROBERT BROWNING

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST
OF LINCOLNSHIRE (1571)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower.
The ringers ran by two, by three;
“Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best,” quoth he,
“Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Play all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe ‘The Brides of Enderby.’ ”

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mew’s and peewit’s pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies,
And dark against day’s golden death

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's fair wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling
Farre away I heard her song.
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitfoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

If it be long, ay, long ago
When I begin to think how long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrow, sharpe and strong;
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save ~~where~~ full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
 Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afaire,
 And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
 And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
 And where the lordly steeple shows.

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

They sayde, "And why should this thing be?
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne:
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby?'"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main;
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tyde comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

“Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.”
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, “Ho, Enderby!”
They rang “The Brides of Enderby!”

With that he cried and beat his breast;
For, lo! along the river’s bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped,
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly at the eygre’s breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre draue,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet;
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by;
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awesome bells they were to me,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed;
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!

To manye more than myne and mee:
But each will mourn his own (she saith)
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling
Ere the early dewes be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST

Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,

“Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.”

JEAN INGELow

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

NO stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be,
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day;

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around;
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away,
He scoured the seas for many a day;
And now grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land;
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound, the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
"Oh Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He curst himself in his despair;

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

THE Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!
Bishop and Abbot, and prior were there;
Many a monk, and many a friar,
Many a knight, and many a squire,
With a great many more of lesser degree,—
In sooth a goodly company;
And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.
Never, I ween, was a prouder seen,
Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,
Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out, through the motley rout
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;
Here and there, like a dog in a fair,
Over comforts and cakes, and dishes and plates,
Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,
Mitre and crosier! he hopp'd upon all!
With a saucy air, he perch'd on the chair
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;
And he peer'd in the face of his Lordship's Grace
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

“We two are the greatest folks here to-day!”

And the priests, with awe, as such freaks they saw,
Said, “The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw!”

The feast was over, the board was clear'd,
The flaws and the custards had all disappear'd
And six little singing-boys,—dear little souls!
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,

Came in order due, two by two,
Marching that grand refectory through!
A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.

Two nice little boys, rather more grown,
Carried lavender-water, and eau de Cologne;
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,
Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.

One little boy more a napkin bore,
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,
And a Cardinal's Hat marked in “permanent ink.”

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight
Of these nice little boys dress'd all in white:

From his finger he draws his costly turquoise:
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

Deposits it straight by the side of his plate,
While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait;
Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing;
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring!

There's a cry and a shout, and a deuce of a rout,
And nobody seems to know what they're about,
And the monks have their pockets all turn'd inside
out;

The friars are kneeling, and hunting and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.

The Cardinal drew off each plum-colour'd shoe,
And left his red stockings exposed to the view;

He peeps, and he feels in the toes and the heels;
They turn up the dishes,—they turn up the plates,—
They take up the poker and poke out the grates,

They turn up the rugs, they examine the mugs;

But no!—no such thing;—they can't find the ring!
And the Abbot declared that, "when nobody twigg'd
it,

Some rascal or other had popp'd in and prigg'd it!"

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book!

In holy anger, and pious grief,

He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!

He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

From the sole of his foot to the crown of his
head;

He cursed him in sleeping, that every night

He should dream of the devil, and wake in a
fright;

He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in
drinking,

He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in wink-
ing;

He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;

He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying,

He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying!—

Never was heard such a terrible curse!

But what gave rise to no little surprise,

Nobody seem'd one penny the worse!

The day was gone; the night came on,

The Monks and the Friars they search'd till dawn;

When the Sacristan saw, on crumpled claw,

Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw!

No longer gay, as on yesterday;

His feathers all seem'd to be turn'd the wrong way.

His pinions droop'd—he could hardly stand,—

His head was as bald as the palm of your hand;

His eye so dim, so wasted each limb,

That, heedless of grammar, they all cried, "That's
him!—

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

That's the scamp that has done this scandalous thing!

That's the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal's ring!"

The poor little Jackdaw, when the monks he saw,
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw;
And turn'd his bald head, as much as to say,
"Pray, be so good as to walk this way!"

Slower and slower he limp'd on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry-door,
Where the first thing they saw,
Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the ring, in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal call'd for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took;

The mute expression served in lieu of confession
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution!

—When those words were heard, that poor little
bird

Was changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd,

He grew sleek, and fat; in addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat!

His tail waggled more than even before;
But no longer it wagg'd with an impudent air,
No longer he perch'd on the Cardinal's chair.

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

He hopp'd now about with a gait devout;
At Matins, at Vespers, he never was out;
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,
He always seem'd telling the Confessor's beads.
If any one lied,—or if any one swore,—
Or slumber'd in pray'r-time and happened to snore,
That good Jackdaw would give a great "Caw!"
As much as to say, "Don't do so any more!"
While many remark'd, as his manners they saw,
That they "never had known such a pious Jack-
daw!"

He long lived the pride of that country side,
And at last in the odour of sanctity died;
When, as words were too faint his merits to paint,
The Conclave determined to make him a Saint;
And on newly-made Saints and Popes, as you know,
It's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonised him by the name of Jem Crow!

RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM
(*"Thomas Ingoldsby"*)

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

I

WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

II

"Now let this wilful grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

III

“A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk;
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you the foremost o’ them a’
Shall ride our forest queen”—
But aye she loot the tears down fa’
For Jock of Hazeldean.

IV

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer’d fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha’,
The ladie was not seen!
She’s o’er the Border, and awa’
Wi’ Jock of Hazeldean.

WALTER SCOTT

KING BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

KING BRUCE of Scotland flung himself down
In a lonely mood to think;
'Tis true he was monarch, and wore a crown,
But his heart was beginning to sink.

For he had been trying to do a great deed,
To make his people glad;
He had tried, and tried, but couldn't succeed;
And so he became quite sad.

He flung himself down in low despair,
As grieved as man could be;
And after a while as he pondered there,
"I'll give it all up," said he.

Now just at that moment a spider dropped
With its silken cobweb clue;
And the King in the midst of his thinking stopped
To see what the spider would do.

'Twas a long way up to the ceiling dome,
And it hung by a rope so fine;

KING BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

That how it would get to its cobweb home
King Bruce could not divine.

It soon began to cling and crawl
Straight up with strong endeavour;
But down it came with a slippery sprawl,
As near the ground as ever.

Up, up it ran, not a second it stayed
To utter the least complaint;
Till it fell still lower, and there it laid,
A little dizzy and faint.

Its head grew steady—again it went,
And travelled a half-yard higher;
'Twas a delicate thread it had to tread,
A road where its feet would tire.

Again it fell and swung below,
But again it quickly mounted;
Till up and down, now fast, now slow,
Nine brave attempts were counted.

“Sure,” cried the King, “that foolish thing
Will strive no more to climb;
When it toils so hard to reach and cling,
And tumbles every time.”

KING BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

But up the insect went once more,
Ah me! 'tis anxious minute;
He's only a foot from his cobweb door,
Oh, say will he lose or win it!

Steadily, steadily, inch by inch
Higher and higher he got;
And a bold little run at the very last pinch
Put him into his native cot.

"Bravo, bravo!" the King cried out,
"All honour to those who *try*;
The spider up there defied despair.
He conquered, and why shouldn't I?"

And Bruce of Scotland braced his mind,
And gossips tell the tale,
That he tried once more as he tried before,
And that time did not fail.

Pay goodly heed, all ye who read,
And beware of saying, "*I can't*;"
'Tis a cowardly word and apt to lead
To Idleness, Folly, and Want.

KING BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

Whenever you find your heart despair

Of doing some goodly thing;

Con over this strain, try bravely again,

And remember the Spider and King.

ELIZA COOK

KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR-MAID

I READ that once in Africa
A princely wight did reign,
Who had to name Cophetua,
As poets they did feign.
From nature's laws he did decline,
For sure he was not of my minde,
He cared not for women-kind,
But did them all disdain.
But mark what on a day;
As he out of his window lay,
He saw a beggar all in grey,
The which did cause his pain.

The blinded boy that shoots so trim
From heaven down did hie,
He drew a dart and shot at him,
In place where he did lie;
Which soon did pierce him to the quick,
And when he felt the arrow prick,
Which in his tender heart did stick,
He looketh as he would die.

KING COPHETUA AND BEGGAR-MAID

“What sudden chance is this,” quoth he,
“That I to love must subject be,
Which never thereto would agree,
But still did it defie?”

Then from the window he did come,
And laid him on his bed;
A thousand heaps of care did run
Within his troubled head.
For now he means to crave her love,
And now he seeks which way to prove
How he his fancy might remove,
And not this beggar wed.
But Cupid had him so in snare,
That this poor beggar must prepare
A salve to cure him of his care,
Or else he would be dead.

And as he musing thus did lie,
He thought for to devise
How he might have her company,
That so did 'maze his eyes.
“In thee,” quoth he, “doth rest my life;
For surely thou shalt be my wife,
Or else this hand with bloody knife,
The Gods shall sure suffice.”
Then from his bed he soon arose,

KING COPHETUA AND BEGGAR-MAID

And to his palace gate he goes;
Full little then this beggar knows
When she the king espies.

"The gods preserve your majesty,"

The beggars all 'gan cry;

"Vouchsafe to give your charity;

Our children's food to buy."

The king to them his purse did cast,

And they to part it made great haste;

This silly woman was the last

That after them did hie.

The king he call'd her back again,

And unto her he gave his chain;

And said, "With us you shall remain

Till such time as we dye.

"For thou," quoth he, "shalt be my wife,

And honoured for my queen;

With thee I mean to lead my life,

As shortly shall be seen:

Our wedding shall appointed be,

And every thing in its degree;

Come on," quoth he, "and follow me,

Thou shalt go shift thee clean.

What is thy name, fair maid?" quoth he.

"Penelophon, O King," quoth she;

With that she made a low courtsey;

A trim one as I ween.

KING COPHETUA AND BEGGAR-MAID

Thus hand in hand along they walk
Unto the king's palace:
The king with courteous, comely talk
This beggar doth embrace.

The beggar blusheth scarlet red,
And straight again as pale as lead.
But not a word at all she said,

She was in such amaze.
At last she spake with trembling voice,
And said, "O King, I do rejoice
That you will take me for your choice,
And my degree so base."

And when the wedding day was come.

The king commanded strait
The noblemen, both all and some,
Upon the queen to wait.
And she behaved herself that day
As if she had never walkt the way;
She had forgot her gown of gray,
Which she did wear of late.

The proverb old is come to passe,
The priest, when he begins his mass,
Forgets that ever clerk he was;

He know'th not his estate.

And thus they led a quiet life
During their princely reign,

KING COPHETUA AND BEGGAR-MAID

And in a tomb were buried both,
As writers showeth plain.
The lords they took it grievously,
The ladies took it heavily,
The commons crièd piteously,
Their death to them was pain.
Their fame did sound so passingly,
That it did pierce the starry sky,
And throughout all the world did fly
To every prince's realm.

Here you may read Cophetua,
Through long time fancy-fed,
Compellèd by the blinded boy
The beggar for to wed:
He that did lovers looks disdain,
To do the same was glad and fain,
Or else he would himself have slain,
In story, as we read.
Disdain no whit, O lady dear,
But pity now thy servant here,
Lest that it hap to thee this year,
As to that king it did.

OLD BALLAD

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT OF CANTERBURY

AN ancient story I'll tell you anon
Of a notable prince, that was called King John;
And he ruled England with main and with might,
For he did great wrong and maintained little right.

And I'll tell you a story, a story so merry,
Concerning the Abbot of Canterbury;
How for his house-keeping and high renown,
They rode post for him to fair London town.

An hundred men, the king did hear say,
The abbot kept in his house every day;
And fifty gold chains, without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the abbot about.

"How now, father abbot, I hear it of thee,
Thou keepest a far better house than me;
And for thy house-keeping and high renown,
I fear thou work'st treason against my crown."

"My liege," quo' the abbot, "I would it were known
I never spend nothing but what is my own;

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT

And I trust your grace will do me no deere,
For spending of my own true-gotten gear."

"Yes, yes, father abbot, thy fault it is high,
And now for the same thou needst must die;
For except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitt'n from thy body.

"And first," quo' the king, "when I'm in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birth,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worth.

"Secondly, tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride the whole world about;
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think."

"O, these are hard questions for my shallow wit,
Nor I cannot answer your grace as yet:
But if you will give me but three weeks' space,
I'll do my endeavour to answer your grace."

"Now three weeks' space to thee will I give,
And this is the longest time thou hast to live;
For if thou dost not answer my questions three,
Thy lands and thy livings are forfeit to me."

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT

Away rode the abbot all sad at that word,
And he rode to Cambridge, and Oxenford;
But never a doctor there was so wise,
That could with his learning an answer devise.

Then home rode the abbot of comfort so cold,
And he met his shepherd a-going to fold:
"How now, my lord abbot, you are welcome home;
What news do you bring us from good King John?"

"Sad news, sad news, shepherd, I must give,
That I have but three days more to live;
For if I do not answer him questions three,
My head will be smitten from my body.

"The first is to tell him there in that stead,
With his crown of gold so fair on his head,
Among all his liege-men so noble of birth,
To within one penny of what he is worth.

"The second to tell him, without any doubt,
How soon he may ride this whole world about;
And at the third question I must not shrink,
But tell him truly what he does think."

"Now cheer up, sir abbot, did you never hear yet,
That a fool may learn a wise man wit?

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT

Lend me horse, and serving men, and your apparel,
And I'll ride to London to answer your quarrel.

"Nay, frown not, if it hath been told unto me,
I am like your lordship, as ever may be;
And if you will but lend me your gown,
There is none shall know us at fair London town."

"Now horses and serving-men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous array most gallant and brave,
With crozier, and mitre, and rochet and cope,
Fit to appear 'fore our father the pope."

"Now welcome, sir abbot," the king he did say,
"Tis well thou'rt come back to keep thy day:
For and if thou canst answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy living both saved shall be.

"And first, when thou seest me here in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birth,
Tell me to one penny what I am worth."

"For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jews, as I have been told,
And twenty-nine is the worth of thee,
For I think thou art one penny worser than he."

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT

The king he laughed, and swore by Saint Bittel,
"I did not think I had been worth so little!
Now secondly tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride this whole world about."

"You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same
Until the next morning he rise again;
And then your grace need not make any doubt
But in twenty-four hours you'll ride it about."

The king he laughed, and swore by St. Joan,
"I did not think it could be gone so soon!
Now from the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think."

"Yea, that shall I do, and make your grace merry;
You think I'm the abbot of Canterbury;
But I'm his poor shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me."

The king he laughed, and swore by the mass,
"I'll make thee lord abbot today in his place!"
"Now nay, my liege, be not in such speed,
For alack I can neither write nor read."

"Four nobles a week, then, will I give thee,
For this merry jest thou hast shown unto me,

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT

And tell the old abbot when thou comest home,
Thou hast brought him a pardon from good King
John."

OLD BALLAD

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

ROBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Apparelled in magnificent attire,
With retinue of many a knight and squire,
On St. John's Eve, at vespers, proudly sat
And heard the priests chant the *Magnificat*.
And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes
De sede, et exaltavit humiles;*"
And slowly lifting up his kingly head,
He to a learned clerk beside him said,
"What mean these words?" The clerk made
answer meet,
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree."
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
" 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!"
And, leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.
When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.

He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds re-echoed from the roofs and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.
At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?"
The frightened sexton muttering, with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the court-yard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self, in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognise.
A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou
here?"

To which King Robert answered, with a sneer,
"I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Upsprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester; thou
Henceforth shall wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counsellor shall lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding-door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering, sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.

Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
"Art thou the King?" the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the King!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.
And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and
blare

Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
"I am the King! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.
Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;
The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!"
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.
In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw,
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now, the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture, bade the rest retire;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
"Art thou the King?" Then, bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

Across those stones that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!"
The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street:
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!"
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
"I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all apparelled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

LADY CLARE

IT was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe,
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betrothed were they:
They two will wed the morrow morn:
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thanked!" said Alice the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair:

LADY CLARE

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?"

Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"

"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,

"I speak the truth: you are my child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;

I speak the truth as I live by bread!

I buried her like my own sweet child,

And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,

O mother," she said, "if this be true,

To keep the best man under the sun

So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,

"But keep the secret for your life,

And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,

When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,

"I will speak out, for I dare not lie,

Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,

And fling the diamond necklace by."

LADY CLARE

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."

She said, "Not so: but I will know

If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith," said Alice the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his right."

"And he shall have it," the lady replied,

"Though I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!

Alas, my child, I sinned for thee."

"O mother, mother, mother," she said,

"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,

My mother dear, if this be so,

And lay your hand upon my head,

And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,

She was no longer Lady Clare:

She went by dale, and she went by down,

With a single rose in her hair.

The lily white doe Lord Ronald had brought

Leapt up from where she lay,

LADY CLARE

Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And followed her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"For I am yours in word and deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn:
He turned and kissed her where she stood:
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood—

LADY CLARE

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

ALFRED TENNYSON

LITTLE BILLEE

THERE were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.

But first with beef and captain's biscuit
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was guzzling Jack and gorging Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.

Now very soon they were so greedy,
They didn't leave not one split pea.

Says guzzling Jack to gorging Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."

Says gorging Jim to guzzling Jacky,
"We have no provisions, so we must eat we."

Says guzzling ^{Jacky} Jack to gorging ^{Jimmy} Jimmy,
"O gorging Jim what a fool you be!

^{What's} "There's little ^{Bill} Bill is young and tender,
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.

LITTLE BILLEE

"O Bill, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the collar of your chemee."

When Bill received this information
His used his pocket-handkerchie.

"O let me say my catechism,
As my poor mammy taught to me."

"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jacky,
While Jim pulled out his snickersnee.

So Bill went up to the main-top-gallant mast,
Where down he fell on his bended knee.

He scarce had come to the Twelfth Commandment,
When up he jumps, "There's land I see.

"There's Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee.

"There's the British fleet a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Nelson, K. C. B."

So when they came to the admiral's vessel
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee.

LITTLE BILLEE

But as for little Bill, he made him
The captain of a seventy-three.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

LOCHINVAR

O, YOUNG Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was
the best;

And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.

So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for
stone,

He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;

But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,

The bride had consented, the gallant came late:

For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,

Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,

Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and
all:

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor, craven bridegroom said never a
word),

LOCHINVAR

"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and
plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better
by far,
To have matched our fair cousin with young
Lochinvar."

LOCHINVAR

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger
stood near;
So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young
Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Nether-
by clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and
they ran:
There wan racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby n'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?
WALTER SCOTT

LORD LOVEL

LORD LOVEL he stood at his castle gate,
Combing his milk-white steed;
When up came Lady Nancy Belle
To wish her lover good speed, speed,
To wish her lover good speed.

"Where are you going, Lord Lovel?" she said,
"Oh! where are you going?" said she.
"I'm going, my Lady Nancy Belle,
Strange countries for to see, to see,
Strange countries for to see!"

"When will you be back, Lord Lovel?" she said;
"Oh! when will you come back?" said she.
"In a year or two—or three at the most,
I'll return to my fair Nancy-cy,
I'll return to my fair Nancy."

But he had not been gone a year and a day,
Strange countries for to see,
When languishing thoughts came into his head,
Lady Nancy Belle he would go see, see,
Lady Nancy Belle he would go see.

LORD LOVEL

So he rode, and he rode on his milk-white steed,
Till he came to London town;
And there he heard St. Pancras' bells,
And the people all mourning round, round,
And the people all mourning round.

"Oh! what is the matter?" Lord Lovel he said,
"Oh! what is the matter?" said he;
"A lord's lady is dead," a woman replied,
And some call her Lady Nancy-cy
And some call her Lady Nancy."

So he ordered the grave to be opened wide,
And the shroud he turned down,
And there he kissed her clay-cold lips,
Till the tears came trickling down, down,
Till the tears came trickling down.

Lady Nancy she died as it might be to-day,
Lord Lovel he died as tomorrow;
Lady Nancy she died out of pure pure grief,
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow, sorrow,
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow.

Lady Nancy was laid in St. Pancras' church,
Lord Lovel was laid in the choir;
And out of her bosom their grew a red rose,

LORD LOVEL

And of her lover's a brier, brier,
And out of her lover's a brier.

They grew and they grew to the church steeple top,
And then they could grow no higher;
So there they entwined in a true lover's knot,
For all lovers true to admire-mire,
For all lovers true to admire.

OLD BALLAD

THE LORD OF BÜRLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
 “If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden I have watched thee daily,
 And I think thou lov’st me well.”
She replies, in accents fainter,
 “‘There is none I love like thee.”
He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof;
Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father’s roof.

“I can make no marriage present;
 Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life.”

They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand;
Summer woods about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."

So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay between his home and hers.
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and ordered gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.

All he shows her makes him dearer;
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.

Then her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before;
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.

And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And while now she wanders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
"All of this is mine and thine."

Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free.
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin;
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove:
But he clasped her like a lover,
And he cheered her soul with love.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirits sank;
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness,
To all duties of her rank;

And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.

But a trouble weighed upon her,
And perplexed her, night and morn
With the burden of an honour
Unto which she was not born.

Faint she grew and ever fainter,
As she murmured, "Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter
Which did win my heart from me!"

So she drooped and drooped before him,
Fading slowly from his side;
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.

Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

Deeply mourned the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh house by Stamford town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he looked at her and said,
"Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."

Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

ALFRED TENNYSON

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

A CHIEFTAIN to the Highlands bound
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry."

"Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?"
"O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullins daughter.

"And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For, should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

"His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
When they have slain her lover?"

Outspake the hardy Highland wight,
"I'll go, my chief! I'm ready;

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady.

“And, by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So, though the waves are raging white
I'll row you o'er the ferry.”

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still, as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armèd men—
Their trampling sounded nearer.

“O haste thee, haste!” the lady cries,
“Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.”

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gathered o'er her.

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reached the fatal shore,—
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For sore dismayed, through storm and shade
His child he did discover:
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover.

“Come back! come back!” he cried in grief
Across the stormy water:
“And I’ll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter! oh my daughter!”

’Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,
Return or aid preventing;
The waters wild went o’er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

THE LOVING BALLAD OF LORD BATEMAN

LORD BATEMAN he was a noble lord,
A noble lord of high degree;
He shipped himself on board a ship,
Some foreign country he would go see.

He sailèd east, and he sailèd west,
Until he came to proud Turkèy;
When he was taken and put to prison,
Until his life was almost wearìe.

And in this prison there grew a tree,
It grew so stout, and grew so strong;
Where he was chainèd by the middle,
Until his life was almost gone.

This Turk he had one only daughter,
The fairest creature my eyes did see;
She stole the keys of her father's prison,
And swore Lord Bateman she would set free.

“Have you got houses? have you got lands?
Or does Northumberland belong to thee?

LOVING BALLAD OF LORD BATEMAN

What would you give to the fair young lady,
That out of prison would set you free?"

"I have got houses, I have got lands,
And half Northumberland belongs to me;
I'll give it all to the fair young lady
That out of prison would set me free."

Oh! then she took him to her father's hall,
And gave to him the best of wine;
And every health she drunk unto him,
"I wish Lord Bateman that you were mine!

"Now in seven years I'll make a vow
And seven years I'll keep it strong,
If you'll wed with no other woman,
I will wed with no other man."

Oh! then she took him to her father's harbour
And gave to him a ship of fame,
"Farewell, farewell to you, Lord Bateman,
I'm afraid I ne'er shall see you again."

Now seven long years are gone and past,
And fourteen days well known to thee;
She packed up all her gay clothing,
And swore Lord Bateman she would go see.

LOVING BALLAD OF LORD BATEMAN

But when she came to Lord Bateman's castle,
So boldly she rang the bell;
"Who's there? who's there?" cried the proud
portèr;
"Who's there? unto me come tell."

"Oh is this Lord Bateman's castle?
Or is his lordship here within?"
"Oh, yes! oh, yes!" cried the young portèr,
"He's just now taken his new bride in."

"Oh, tell him to send me a slice of bread,
And a bottle of the best wine;
And not forgetting the fair young lady
Who did release him when close confine."

Away, away went this proud young portèr,
Away, away, and away, went he,
Until he came to Lord Bateman's chamber—
Down on his bended knees fell he.

"What news, what news, my proud young portèr?
What news hast thou brought unto me?"
"There is the fairest of all young creatures
That ever my two eyes did see!

"She has got rings on every finger,
And round one of them she has got three,

LOVING BALLAD OF LORD BATEMAN

And as much gay clothing round her middle
As would buy all Northumberlea.

"She bids you send her a slice of bread,
And a bottle of the best wine;
And not forgetting the fair young lady
Who did release you when close confine."

Lord Bateman he then in a passion flew,
And broke his sword in splinters three;
Saying, "I will give all my father's riches
If Sophia has crossed the sea."

Then up spoke the young bride's mother,
Who never was heard to speak so free:
"You'll not forget my only daughter,
If Sophia has crossed the sea."

"I own I made a bride of your daughter,
She's neither the better nor worse for me;
She came to me with her horse and saddle,
She may go back in her coach and three."

Lord Bateman prepared another marriage,
And sang, with heart so full of glee,
"I'll range no more in foreign countries
Now, since Sophia has crossed the sea."

OLD BALLAD

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

OF T I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor—
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"Tonight will be a stormy night,
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father, will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

The minister clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon."

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe;
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time;
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
And never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood
A furlong from their door.

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

They wept, and turning homeward cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet:"
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed;
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
These footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you can see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MAIDEN - SONG

LONG ago and long ago
 And long ago still,
There dwelt three merry maidens
 Upon a distant hill.
One was tall Meggan,
 And one was dainty May,
But one was fair Margaret,
 More fair than I can say,
Long ago and long ago.

When Meggan pluckt the thorny rose,
 And when May pulled the brier,
Half the birds would swoop to see,
 Half the beasts drew nigher,
Half the fishes of the streams
 Would dart up to admire.
But when Margaret pluckt a flag-flower
 Or poppy hot aflame,
All the beasts and all the birds
 And all the fishes came
To her hand more soft than snow.

MAIDEN - SONG

Strawberry leaves and May-dew
In brisk morning air,
Strawberry leaves and May-dew
Make maidens fair.

"I go for strawberry leaves,"
Meggan said one day:
"Fair Margaret can bide at home,
But you come with me, May.
Up the hill and down the hill,
Along the winding way
You and I are used to go."

So these two fair sisters
Went with innocent will
Up the hill and down again,
And round the homestead hill:
While the fairest sat at home,
Margaret like a queen,
Like a blush-rose, like the moon
In her heavenly sheen,
Fragrant-breathed as milky cow
Or field of blossoming bean,
Graceful as an ivy bough
Born to cling and lean;
Thus she sat to sing and sew.

When she raised her lustrous eyes
A beast peeped at the door;

MAIDEN - SONG

When she downward cast her eyes
A fish gasped on the floor;
When she turned away her eyes
A bird perched on the sill,
Warbling out its heart of love,
Warbling, warbling still,
With pathetic pleadings low.

Light-foot May with Meggan
Sought the choicest spot,
Clothed with thyme-alternate grass:
Then, while day waxed hot,
Sat at ease to play and rest,
A gracious rest and play;
The loveliest maidens near or far,
When Margaret was away,
Who sat at home to sing and sew.

Sun-glow flushed their lovely cheeks,
Wind-play tossed their hair,
Creeping things among the grass
Stroked them here and there;
Meggan piped a merry note,
A fitful wayward lay
While shrill as bird on topmost twig
Piped merry May;
Honey-smooth the double flow.

MAIDEN - SONG

Sped a herdsman from the vale,
Mounting like a flame;
All on fire to hear and see,
With floating locks he came.
Looked neither north nor south,
Neither east nor west,
But sat him down at Meggan's feet
As love-bird on his nest,
And wooed her with a silent awe,
With trouble not expressed;
She sang the tears into his eyes,
The heart out of his breast:
So he loved her, listening so.

She sang the heart out of his breast,
The words out of his tongue;
Hand and foot and pulse he paused
Till her song was sung.
Then he spoke up from his place
Simple words and true:
"Scanty goods have I to give,
Scanty skill to woo;
But I have a will to work
And a heart for you:
Bid me stay or bid me go."

Then Meggan mused within herself:
"Better be first with him

MAIDEN - SONG

Than dwell where fairer Margaret sits,
Who shines my brightness dim,
Forever second where she sits,
However fair I be;
I will be lady of his love
And he shall worship me;
I will be lady of his herds
And stoop to his degree,
At home where kids and fatlings grow."

Sped a shepherd from the height
Headlong down to look,
(White lambs followed, lured by love
Of their shepherd's crook) :
He turned neither east nor west,
Neither north nor south,
But knelt right down to May, for love
Of her sweet-singing mouth;
Forgot his flocks, his panting flocks
In parching hill-side drouth;
Forgot himself for weal or woe.

Trilled her song and swelled her song
With maiden coy caprice
In a labyrinth of throbs,
Pauses, cadences;
Clear-noted as a dropping brook,

MAIDEN - SONG

Soft-noted like the bees,
Wild-noted as the shivering wind
Forlorn through forest-trees:
Love-noted like the wood-pigeon
Who hides herself for love,
Yet cannot keep her secret safe,
But coos and coos thereof:
Thus the notes rang loud or low.

He hung breathless on her breath,
Speechless, who listened well:
Could not speak or think or wish
Till silence broke the spell.
Then he spoke and spread his hands,
Pointing here and there:
"See my sheep and see my lambs,
Twin lambs which they bare.
All myself I offer you,
All my flocks and care,
Your sweet song hath moved me so."

In her fluttered heart young May
Mused a dubious while:
"If he loves me as he says"—
Her lips curved with a smile:
"Where Margaret shines like the sun
I shine but like a moon:

MAIDEN - SONG

If sister Meggan makes her choice
I can make mine as soon;
At cockcrow we were sister-maids,
We may be brides at noon."
Said Meggan "Yes"; May said not "No."

Fair Margaret stayed alone at home;
Awhile she sang her song,
Awhile sat silent, then she thought
"My sisters loiter long."
That sultry noon had waned away,
Shadows had waxen great:
"Surely," she thought within herself,
"My sisters loiter late."
She rose, and peered out at the door,
With patient heart to wait,
And heard a distant nightingale
Complaining of its mate;
Then down the garden slope she walked,
Down to the garden gate,
Leaned on the rail and waited so.

The slope was lightened by her eyes
Like summer lightning fair,
Like rising of the haloed moon
Lightened her glimmering hair,
While her face lightened like the sun

MAIDEN - SONG

Whose dawn is rosy white.
Thus crowned with maiden majesty
She peered into the night,
Looked up the hill and down the hill,
To left hand and to right,
Flashing like fire-flies to and fro.

Waiting thus in weariness
She marked the nightingale
Telling, if any one would heed
Its old complaining tale.
Then lifted she her voice and sang,
Answering the bird:
Then lifted she her voice and sang;
Such notes were never heard,
From any bird when Springs' in blow.

The King of all that country,
Coursing far, coursing near,
Curbed his amber-bitted steed,
Coursed amain to hear;
All his princes in his train,
Squire and knight and peer,
With his crown upon his head
Down he fell at Margaret's knees
Lord King of all that land,
To her highness bending low.

MAIDEN - SONG

Every beast and bird and fish
Came mustering to the sound,
Every man and every maid
From miles of country round:
Meggan on her herdsman's arm,
With her shepherd May,
Flocks and herds trooped at their heels
Along the hill-side way;
No foot too feeble for the ascent,
Not any head too grey;
Some were swift and none were slow.

So Margaret sang her sisters home
In their marriage mirth;
Sang free birds out of the sky,
Beasts along the earth,
Sang up fishes of the deep—
All breathing things that move—
Sang from far and sang from near
To her lovely love;
Sang together friend and foe;

Sang a golden-bearded king
Straightway to her feet,
Sang him silent where he knelt
In eager anguish sweet.
But when the clear voice died away,

MAIDEN - SONG

When longest echoes died,
He stood up like a royal man
And claimed her for his bride.
So three maids were wooed and won
In a brief May-tide,
Long ago and long ago.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

MY LITTLE DOLL

I ONCE had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
And I cried for more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay,

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled:
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

THE Raven croaked as she sat at her meal,
And the Old Woman knew what he said,
And she grew pale at the Raven's tale,
And sickened and went to her bed.

"Now fetch me my children, and fetch them with
speed,"

The Old Woman of Berkeley said,
"The Monk my son, and my daughter the Nun,
Bid them hasten or I shall be dead."

The Monk her son, and her daughter the Nun,
Their way to Berkeley went,
And they have brought with pious thought
The holy sacrament.

The Old Woman shrieked as they entered her door,
And she cried with a voice of despair,
"Now take away the sacrament,
For its presence I cannot bear!"

Her lip it trembled with agony,
The sweat ran down her brow,

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

"I have tortures in store for evermore,
But spare me, my children, now!"

Away they sent the sacrament,
The fit it left her weak,
She looked at her children with ghastly eyes,
And faintly struggled to speak.

"All kind of sin I have rioted in,
And the judgment now must be,
But I secured my children's souls,
Oh! pray, my children, for me!

"I have 'nointed myself with infant's fat,
The fiends have been my slaves,
From sleeping babes I have sucked the breath,
And breaking by charms the sleep of death,
I have called the dead from their graves.

"And the Devil will fetch me now in fire,
My witchcrafts to atone;
And I who have troubled the dead man's grave
Shall never have rest in my own.

"Bless, I entreat, my winding sheet,
My children, I beg of you;

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

And with holy water sprinkle my shroud,
And sprinkle my coffin too.

“And let me be chained in my coffin of stone,
And fasten it strong, I implore,
With iron bars, and with three chains,
Chain it to the church floor.

“And bless the chains and sprinkle them,
And let fifty Priests stand round,
Who night and day the mass may say
Where I lie on the ground.

“And see that fifty Choristers
Beside the bier attend me,
And day and night by the tapers' light,
With holy hymns defend me.

“Let the church bells all, both great and small,
Be tolled by night and day,
To drive from thence the fiends who come
To bear my body away.

“And ever have the church door barred
After the even-song;
And I beseech you, children dear,
Let the bars and bolts be strong.

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

“And let this be three days and nights
My wretched corpse to save;
Till the fourth morning keep me safe,
And then I may rest in my grave.”

The Old Woman of Berkeley laid her down,
And her eyes grew deadly dim,
Short came her breath and the struggle of death
Did loosen every limb.

They blest the old woman's winding sheet
With rites and prayers due,
With holy water they sprinkled her shroud,
And they sprinkled her coffin too.

And they chained her in her coffin of stone,
And with iron barred it down,
And in the church with three strong chains
They chained it to the ground.

And they blessed the chains and sprinkled them,
And fifty Priests stood round,
By night and day the mass to say
Where she lay on the ground.

And fifty sacred Choristers
Beside the bier attend her,

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

Who day and night by the tapers' light
Should with holy hymns defend her.

To see the Priests and Choristers
It was a goodly sight,
Each holding, as it were, a staff,
A taper burning bright.

And the church bells all, both great and small,
Did toll so loud and long;
And they have barred the church door hard,
After the even-song.

And the first night the tapers' light
Burnt steadily and clear,
But they without a hideous rout
Of angry fiends could hear;

A hideous roar at the church door
Like a long thunder peel;
And the Priests they prayed, and the Choristers sung
Louder in fearful zeal.

Loud tolled the bell, the Priests prayed well,
The tapers they burnt bright,
The Monk her son, and her daughter the Nun,
They told their beads all night.

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

The cock he crew, the Fiends they flew
From the voice of the morning away;
Then undisturbed the Choristers sing,
And the fifty Priests they pray;
As they had sung and prayed all night,
They prayed and sung all day.

The second night the tapers' light
Burnt dismally and blue,
And every one saw his neighbour's face
Like a dead man's face to view.

And yells and cries without arise
That the stoutest heart might shock,
And a deafening roaring like a cataract pouring
Over a mountain rock.

The Monk and the Nun they told their beads
As fast as they could tell,
And aye as louder grew the noise
The faster went the bell.

Louder and louder the Choristers sung
As they trembled more and more,
And the Priests as they prayed to heaven for aid,
They smote their breasts full sore.

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

The cock he crew, the Fiends they flew
From the voice of the morning away;
Then undisturbed the Choristers sing,
And the fifty Priests they pray;
As they had sung and prayed all night,
They prayed and sung all day.

The third night came, and the tapers' flame
A frightful stench did make;
And they burnt as though they had been dipt
In the burning brimstone lake.

And the loud commotion, like the rushing of ocean,
Grew momentarily more and more;
And strokes as of a battering ram
Did shake the strong church door.

The bellmen, they for very fear
Could toll the bell no longer;
And still as louder grew the strokes
Their fear it grew the stronger.

The Monk and Nun forgot their beads,
They fell on the ground in dismay;
There was not a single Saint in heaven
To whom they did not pray.

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

And the Choristers' song, which late was so strong,
Faltered with consternation,
For the church did rock as an earthquake shock
Uplifted its foundation.

And a sound was heard like a trumpet's blast
That shall one day wake the dead;
The strong church door could bear no more,
And the bolts and the bars they fled;

And the tapers' light was extinguished quite,
And the Choristers faintly sung,
And the Priests dismayed, panted and prayed,
And on all Saints in heaven for aid
They called with trembling tongue.

And in he came with eyes of flame,
The Devil to fetch the dead,
And all the church with his presence glowed
Like a fiery furnace red.

He laid his hand on the iron chains,
And like flax they mouldered asunder,
And the coffin lid, which was barred so firm,
He burst with his voice of thunder.

And he bade the Old Woman of Berkeley rise,
And come with her Master away;

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

A cold sweat started on that cold corpse,
At the voice she was forced to obey.

She rose on her feet in her winding sheet,
Her dead flesh quivered with fear,
And a groan like that which the Old Woman gave
Never did mortal hear.

She followed her Master to the church door,
There stood a black horse there;
His breath was red like furnace smoke,
His eyes like a meteor's glare.

The Devil he flung her on the horse,
And he leapt up before,
And away the lightning's speed they went,
And she was seen no more.

They saw her no more, but her cries
For four miles round they could hear,
And children at rest at their mothers' breast
Started, and screamed with fear.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau,
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least, in fable;
And even the child who knows no better,
Than to interpret by the letter,
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then, on a winter's day,
But warm and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And, silence publicly enjoined,
Delivered briefly thus his mind.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED

“My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.”

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied.

“Methinks the gentleman,” quoth she,
“Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will, would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;

My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?”

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting and sidling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well expressed,
Influenced mightily the rest,
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED

The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow;
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and pecked each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learned, in future, to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

INSTRUCTION

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

WILLIAM COWPER

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

HAMELIN TOWN'S in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheese out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
“ ’Tis clear,” cried they, “our Mayor’s a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can’t or won’t determine
What’s best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you’re old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we’re lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing!”
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council
At length the Mayor broke silence:
“For a guilder I’d my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It’s easy to bid one rack one’s brain—
I’m sure my poor head aches again,
I’ve scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!”
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
“Bless us,” cried the Mayor, “what’s that?”
(With the Corporation as he sat,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
“Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!”

“Come in!”—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith or kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: “It’s as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom’s tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!”

He advanced to the council-table:
And, “Please your honours,” said he, “I’m able,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper.”
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarfs end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
“Yet,” said he, “poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?”
“One? fifty thousand!”—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled;
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and prickling whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.

From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Swam across and lived to carry
 (As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
And it seemed as if a voice

 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'Oh rats, rejoice!

 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as me thought it said, 'Come, bore me!
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place
With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

A thousand guilders! The mayor looked blue;
So did the corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried
"No trifling! I can't wait beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner-time

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

Once more he stept into the street
And to his lips again
Laid his low pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is
scattering,

Out came the children running.

All the little boys and girls,

With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,

And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,

Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after

The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood

As if they were changed into blocks of wood,

Unable to move a step, or cry

To the children merrily skipping by,

—Could only follow with the eye

That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.

But how the Mayor was on the rack,

And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,

As the Piper turned from the High Street

To where the Weser rolled its waters

Right in the way of their sons and daughters!

However he turned from South to West,

And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,

And after him the children pressed;

Great was the joy in every breast.

"He never can cross that mighty top!

He's forced to let the piping drop,

And we shall see our children stop!"

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

When, lo, as they reached the mountain side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
 And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
 His sadness, he was used to say,—
“It’s dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can’t forget that I’m bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles’ wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Ope to the rich at as easy a rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Where any one playing on pipe or tabour
Was sure for the future to lose his labour,
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.
So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from
mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our
promise!

ROBERT BROWNING

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

GWENWYNWYN withdrew from the feasts of
his hall;

He slept very little, he prayed not at all;
He pondered, and wandered, and studied alone;
And sought, day and night, the philosopher's stone.

He found it at length, and he made its first proof
By turning to gold all the lead of his roof:
Then he bought some magnanimous heroes, all fire,
Who lived but to smite and be smitten for hire.

With these, on the plains like a torrent he broke;
He filled the whole country with flame and with
smoke;
He killed all the swine, and he broached all the wine;
He drove off the sheep, and the beeves, and the kine;

He took castles and towns; he cut short limbs and
lives;
He made orphans and widows of children and wives:
This course many years he triumphantly ran,
And did mischief enough to be called a great man.

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

When, at last, he had gained all for which he had
striven,

He bethought him of buying a passport to heaven;
Good and great as he was, yet he did not well know
How soon, or which way, his great spirit might go.

He sought the grey friars, who, beside a wild stream,
Refected their frames on a primitive scheme;
The gravest and wisest Gwenwynwyn found out,
All lonely and ghostly, and angling for trout.

Below the white dash of a mighty cascade,
Where a pool of the stream a deep resting-place
made,
And rock-rooted oaks stretched their branches on
high,
The friar stood musing, and throwing his fly.

To him said Gwenwynwyn, "Hold, father, here's
stone,
For the good of the church, and the good of the
poor;"
Then he gave him the stone; but, ere more he could
speak,
Wrath came on the friar so holy and meek:

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

He had stretched forth his hand to receive the red
gold,
And he thought himself mocked by Gwenwynwyn
the bold;
And in scorn of the gift, and in rage at the giver,
He jerked it immediately into the river.

Gwenwynwyn, aghast, not a syllable spake;
The philosopher's stone made a duck and a drake:
Two systems of circles a moment were seen,
And the stream smoothed them off, as they never
had been.

Gwenwynwyn regained, and uplifted, his voice:
"Oh friar, grey friar, full rash was thy choice;
The stone, the good stone, which away thou hast
thrown,
Was the stone of all stones, the philosopher's
stone!"

The friar looked pale, when his error he knew;
The friar looked red, and the friar looked blue;
And heels over head, from the point of a rock,
He plunged, without stopping to pull off his frock.

He dived very deep, but he dived all in vain,
The prize he had slighted he found not again:

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

Many times did the friar his diving renew,
And deeper and deeper the river still grew.

Gwenwynwyn gazed long, of his senses in doubt,
To see the grey friar a diver so stout:
Then sadly and slowly his castle he sought,
And left the friar diving, like dabchick distraught.

Gwenwynwyn fell sick with alarm and despite,
Died, and went to the devil, the very same night:
The magnanimous heroes he held in his pay
Sacked his castle, and marched with the plunder
away.

No knell on the silence of midnight was rolled,
For the flight of the soul of Gwenwynwyn the Bold:
The brethren, unfeed, let the mighty soul pass,
Without praying a prayer, or intoning a mass.

The friar haunted ever beside the dark stream;
The philosopher's stone was his thought and his
dream:

And day after day, ever head under heels
He dived all the time he could spare from his meals.

He dived, and he dived, to the end of his days,
As the peasants oft witnessed with fear and amaze:

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

The mad friar's diving-place long was their theme,
And no plummet can fathom that pool of the stream.

And still, when light clouds on the midnight winds
ride,

If by moonlight you stray on the lone river side,
The ghost of the friar may be seen diving there,
With head in the water, and heels in the air.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary

Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—

Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—

Nameless here for evermore.

THE RAVEN

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never
felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating,
“ ’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door;—
That it is, and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then
no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I
implore;
But the fact is, I was napping; and so gently you
came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my
chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened
wide the door;—
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood
there, wondering, fearing,

THE RAVEN

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared
to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness
gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whisp-
ered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the
word, "Lenore!"
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into my chamber turning, all my soul within
me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than
before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my
window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery
explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many
a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days
of yore;

THE RAVEN

Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute
stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my
chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into
smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance
it wore.
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I
said, “art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from
the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s
Plutonian shore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear dis-
course so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy
bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being

THE RAVEN

Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his
chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust,
spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he
did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather
then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "other friends
have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have
flown before."
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock
and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom un-
merciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs
one burden bore—

THE RAVEN

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden
 bore
Of 'Never—nevermore'."

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into
 smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird,
 and bust and door;
Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to
 linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird
 of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and omi-
 nous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
 expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
 bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at
 ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight
 gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight
 gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

THE RAVEN

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed
from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the
tufted floor.

“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by
these angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy mem-
ories of Lenore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this
lost Lenore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—prophet still
if bird or devil!—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed
thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—

On this home my horror haunted—tell me truly,
I implore!

Is there— *is there* balm in Gilead?—tell me— tell
me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—prophet still
if bird or devil!

THE RAVEN

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God
we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend,"
I shrieked, upstarting—

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form
from off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still
is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door;

THE RAVEN

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's
that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating
on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE RAVEN

UNDERNEATH a huge oak tree
There was of swine a huge company,
That grunted as they crunched the mast:
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.
Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly;
He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!
Blacker was he than blackest jet,
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight
By the side of a river both deep and great.

Where then did the Raven go?

He went high and low,
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.
Many Autumns, many Springs
Travelled he with wandering wings:
Many Summers, many Winters—
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She,
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.

THE RAVEN

They built them a nest in the topmost bough,
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.
But soon came a woodman in leathern guise,
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.
He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own
oak.

His young ones were killed; for they could not
depart,
And their mother did die of a broken heart.

The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever;
And they floated it down on the course of the river.
They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.
The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land
Such a storm there did rise as no ship could with-
stand.

It bulged on a rock, and the waves rushed in fast:
The old Raven flew round and round, and cawed to
the blast.

He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls—
See! See! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!

Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,

THE RAVEN

And he thanked him again and again for this treat:

They had taken his all, and *revenge was sweet!*

[We must not think so; but forget and forgive,

And what Heaven gives life to, we'll still let it live!]

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Mariner came back to his own Country.

An ancient
Mariner meeteth
three gallants
bidden to a
wedding feast and
detaineth one.

IT is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three,
"By thy long gray beard and glitter-
ing eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are open
wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

“Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard
loon!”

Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The wedding
Guest is
spell-bound by the
eye of the old sea
faring man, and
constrained to hear
his tale

He holds him with his glittering eye
The Wedding Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.—

“The ship was cheered, the harbour
cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells
how the ship
sailed southward
with a good wind
and fair weather,
till it reached
the line

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day
Till over the mast at noon—”

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The Wedding Guest here beat his
breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding
Guest heareth the
bridal music, but
the Mariner
continueth his tale

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding Guest he beat his
breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship driven
by a storm toward
the south pole

“And now the storm-blast came, and
he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping
prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The ship drove fast, loud roared the
blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and
snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
The ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice
and of fearful
sounds where no
living thing was
to be seen

And through the drifts the snowy
clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men, nor beasts we ken
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared
and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great
sea-bird called the
Albatross, came
through the
snow-fog, and was
received with
great joy and
hospitality

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew,
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the
Albatross proveth
a bird of good
omen, and
followeth the ship
as it returned
northward
through fog and
floating ice

And a good south wind sprung up
behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-
smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient
Mariner
inhospitably
killeth the pious
bird of good omen

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee
thus—!
Why look'st thou so?" "With my
cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

Part II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew
behind,
But no sweet bird did follow;
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo!

His ship mates cry
out against the
ancient Mariner,
for killing the bird
of good luck

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog
cleared off, they
justify the same,
and thus make
themselves
accomplices in the
crime

Nor dim, nor red, like God's own
head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the
bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to
slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The fair breeze
continues; the
ship enters the
Pacific Ocean, and
northward, even
till it reaches the
Line

The fair breeze blew, the white foam
flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed

Down dropt the breeze, the sails
dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be:
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross
begins to be
avenged

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink:
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yes, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter
drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

A Spirit had
followed them;
one of the
invisible
inhabitants of this
planet, neither
departed souls nor
angels; concerning
whom the learned
Jew Josephus,
and the Platonic
Constantinopoli-
tan, Michael
Psellus may be
consulted. They
are very
numerous, and
there is no climate
or element without
one or more

The shipmates, in
their sore distress,
would fain throw
the whole guilt
on the ancient
Mariner: in sign
whereof they hang
the dead sea-bird
round his neck

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Part III

The ancient
Mariner beholdeth
a sign in the
clement afar off

There passed a weary time. Each
throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him to be
a ship; and at a
dear ransom he
freeth his speech
from the bonds of
thirst

With throats unslaked, with black
lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we
stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood!
And cried, A sail! a sail!

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

With throats unslaked, with black
 lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
A flash of joy; Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For can
it be a ship that comes onward
without wind or tide
See! See! (I cried) she tacks no
 more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all aflame,
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove sud-
 denly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton
of a ship
And straight the Sun was flecked with
 bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he
 peered
With broad and burning face.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat
loud)

How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the
Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are
seen as bars on
the face of the
setting Sun

Are those her ribs through which the
Sun

The Spectre-
Woman and her
Death-mate, and
no other on
board the skeleton
ship

Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Like vessel, like
crew

Her lips were red, her looks were
free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was
she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death, and Life-
in-Death have
diced for the ship's
crew, and she (the
latter) winneth
the ancient
Mariner

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won! I've
won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

No twilight
within the courts
of the Sun

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush
out

At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre bark.

At the rising of
the Moon

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the
night,
The steersman's face by his lamp
gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright
star
Within the nether tip.

One after another

One after one, by the star-dogged
Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly
pang,
And cursed me with his eye.
Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard not sigh nor groan)

His shipmates
drop down dead

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death
begins her work
on the ancient
Mariner

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

Part IV

The Wedding
Guest feareth that
a Spirit is talking
to him

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and
brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient
Mariner assureth
him of his bodily
life, and
proceedeth to
relate his horrible
penance

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-
Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

He despiseth the
creatures of the
calm

The many men, so beautiful
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that
they should live,
and so many lie
dead

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

But the curse
liveth for him in
the eyes of the
dead men

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea
and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their
limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on
me
Had never passed away.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that
curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness
and fixedness he
yearneth towards
the journeying
Moon, and the
stars that still
sojourn, yet still
move onward;
and everywhere
the blue sky
belongs to them,
and is their
appointed rest
and their native
country and their
own natural
homes, which
they enter
unannounced, as
lords that are
certainly expected
and yet there is a
silent joy at their
arrival

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams becocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining
white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every
track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and
their happiness

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my
heart,

He blesseth them
in his heart

And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins
to break

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part V

O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from
Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

By grace of the
holy Mother, the
ancient Mariner is
refreshed with
rain

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with
dew;
And when I woke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was
cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth
sounds and seeth
strange sights and
commotions in the
sky and the
element

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

And the coming wind did roar more
loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one
black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and
still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high
crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the
ship's crew are
inspired and the
ship moves on

The loud wind never reached the
ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all
uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The helmsman steered, the ship
 moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless
 tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me."

But not by the
souls of the men,
nor by dæmons of
earth or middle
air, but by a
blessed troop of
angelic spirits,
sent down by the
invocation of the
guardian saint

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"—
"Be calm, thou Wedding Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in
 pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped
 their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through
 their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Around, around, flew each sweet
sound,

Then darted to the sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and
air

With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lovely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sail'd on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The lonesome
Spirit from the
south-pole carries
on the ship as far
as the Line, in
obedience to the
angelic troop, but
still requireth
vengeance

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her
length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

The Polar Spirit's
fellow-dæmons,
the invisible
inhabitants of the
element, take part
in his wrong; and
two of them
relate, one to the
other, that
penance long and

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

heavy for the
ancient Mariner
hath been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance
done,
And penance more will do.'

Part VI

First Voice

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so
fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast; '

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

The Mariner hath
been cast into a
trance; for the
angelic power
causeth the vessel
to drive north-
ward faster than
human life could
endure

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice

'The air is cut away before
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more
high!

Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is
abated.'

The supernatural
motion is
retarded; the
Mariner awakes,
and his penance
begins anew

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon
was high,
The dead men stood together.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they
died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is
finally expiated

And now this spell was snapt: once
more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks
on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on
me,

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient
Mariner beholdeth
his native country

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bar was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no
less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent
light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

The angelic spirits
leave the dead
bodies,

And appear in
their own forms
of light

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were;
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his
hand:

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THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his
hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Part VII

The Hermit of
the Wood,

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, at noon, at eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them
talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights, so many and
fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the
ship with wonder

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit
said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see
those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Unless perchance it were
Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf
below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly
sinketh

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
Mariner is saved
in the Pilot's
boat

Stunned by that loud and dreadful
sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Like one that hath been seven days
drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round:
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the
while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The Hermit stepped forth from the
boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner earnestly
entreateth the
Hermit to shrieve
him; and the
penance of life
falls on him

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee
say—
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever and
anon throughout
his future life an
agony constraineth
him to travel from
land to land,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

What loud uproar bursts from that
door!

The wedding guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding Guest! this soul hath
been

Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends
Old men, and babes, and loving
friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by
his own example,
love and reverence
to all things that
God made and
loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been
stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

ROSABELLE

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle lady, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

“Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?”

“ ’Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,

ROSABELLE

But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

ROSABELLE

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-waves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

WALTER SCOTT

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
He stretched some chords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine,
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well-pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
And yet he used them so,

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

That what in other mouths was rough
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For idly, hour by hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use,
For, in mere weeds and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But, when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed and called him good-for-
nought.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'er his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him.

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their first-born brother as a god.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

THE SINGING LEAVES

A Ballad

I

“**W**HAT fairings will ye that I bring?”
Said the King to his daughters three;
“For I to Vanity Fair am bound,
Now say what shall they be?”

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,
That lady tall and grand:
“O bring me pearls and diamonds great,
And gold rings for my hand.”

Thereafter spake the second daughter,
That was both white and red:
“For me bring silks that will stand alone,
And a gold comb for my head.”

Then came the turn of the least daughter,
That was whiter than thistle-down,
And among the gold of her blithesome hair
Dim shone the golden crown.

THE SINGING LEAVES

"There came a bird this morning,
And sang 'neath my bower eaves,
Till I dreamed, as his music made me,
'Ask thou for the Singing Leaves'."

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson
With a flush of angry scorn:
"Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,
And chosen as ye were born;

"But she like a thing of peasant race,
That is happy binding the sheaves;"
Then he saw her dead mother in her face,
And said, "Thou shalt have thy leaves."

II

He mounted and rode three days and nights
Till he came to Vanity Fair,
And 'twas easy to buy the gems and the silk,
But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,
And asked of every tree,
"O, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,
I pray you give it me!"

THE SINGING LEAVES

But the trees all kept their counsel,
And never a word said they,
Only there sighed from the pine-tops
A music of seas far away.

Only the pattering aspen
Made a sound of growing rain,
That fell ever faster and faster,
Then faltered to silence again.

"O, where shall I find a little foot-page
That would win both hose and shoon,
And will bring to me the Singing Leaves
If they grow under the Moon?"

Then lightly turned him Walter the page,
By the stirrup as he ran:
"Now pledge ye me the truesome word
Of a king and gentleman,

"That you will give me the first, first thing
You meet at your castle gate,
And the Princess shall get the Singing Leaves,
Or mine be a traitor's fate."

The King's head dropt upon his breast
A moment, as it might be;

THE SINGING LEAVES

'Twill be my dog, he thought, and said,
"My faith I plight to thee."

Then Walter took from next his heart
A packet small and thin,
"Now give you this to the Princess Anne,
The Singing Leaves are therein."

III

As the King rode in at his castle-gate,
A maiden to meet him ran,
And "Welcome, father!" she laughed and cried
Together, the Princess Anne.

"Lo, here the Singing Leaves," quoth he,
"And woe, but they cost me dear!"
She took the packet, and the smile
Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,
And then gushed up again,
And lighted her tears as the sudden sun
Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,
Sang, "I am Walter the page,
And the songs I sing 'neath thy window
Are my only heritage."

THE SINGING LEAVES

And the second Leaf sang, "But in the land
That is neither on earth or sea,
My lute and I are lords of more
Than thrice this kingdom's fee."

And the third Leaf sang, "Be mine! be mine!"
And ever it sang, "Be mine!"
Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,
And said, "I am thine, thine, thine!"

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,
At the second she turned aside,
At the third, 'twas as if a lily flushed
With a rose's red heart's tide.

"Good counsel gave the bird," said she,
I have my hope thrice o'er,
For they sing to my very heart," she said,
"And it sings to them evermore."

She brought to him her beauty and truth,
But and broad earldoms three,
And he made her queen of the broader lands
He held of his lute in fee.

JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

“**W**ILL you walk into my parlour?” said the Spider to the Fly,

“ ’Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;

The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show you when
you are there.”

“Oh, no, no,” said the little Fly, “to ask me is in vain;

For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come down again.”

“I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up
so high;

Will you rest upon my little bed?” said the Spider to the Fly.

“There are pretty curtains drawn around; the sheets
are fine and thin,

And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck you
in!”

“Oh, no, no,” said the little Fly, “for I’ve often
heard it said,

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

They never, never, wake again, who sleep upon your bed!"

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, "Dear friend
what can I do,
't'o prove the warm affection I've always felt for
you?"

I have within my pantry good store of all that's
nice;

I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to
take a slice?"

"Oh, no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that
cannot be,

I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish
to see!"

"Sweet creature!" said the Spider, "you're witty and
you're wise,

How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant
are your eyes;

I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold
yourself."

"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're
pleased to say,

And bidding you good-morning now, I'll call another
day."

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

The Spider turned him round about, and went into
his den,

For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back
again:

So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the Fly.

Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did
sing

“Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and
silver wing;

Your robes are green and purple—there’s a crest
upon your head;

Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are
dull as lead!”

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly
flitting by;

With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and
nearer drew,

Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and
purple hue—

Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish
thing!—at last

Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her
fast.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal
den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out
again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story
read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne'er give
heed:
Unto an evil counsellor close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the Spider and
the Fly.

MARY HOWITT

A TRAGIC STORY

(From the German)

THERE lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore;
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon this curious case
And swore he'd change the pigtail's place,
And have it hanging at his face
Not dangling there behind him.

Says he, "The mystery I've found,—
I'll turn me round,"—he turned him round;
But still it hung behind him.

Then round, and round, and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;
In vain—it mattered not a pin,—
The pigtail hung behind him.

And right, and left, and round about,
And up, and down, and in, and out,

A TRAGIC STORY

He turned; but still the pigtail stout
Hung steadily behind him.

And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist, and twirl, and talk,
Alas! still faithful to his back,
The pigtail hangs behind him.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

I MADE myself a little boat,
As trim as trim could be;
I made it of a great pearl shell
Found in the Indian Sea.

I made my masts of wild sea-rush
That grew on a secret shore,
And the scarlet plume of the halcyon
Was the pleasant flag I bore.

For my sails I took the butterfly's wings;
For my ropes the spider's line;
And that mariner old, the Nautilus,
To steer me over the brine.

For he had sailed six thousand years,
And knew each isle and bay;
And I thought that we, in my little boat,
Could merrily steer away.

The stores I took were plentiful:
The dew as it sweetly fell;

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

And the honey that was hoarded up
In the wild bee's summer cell.

"Now steer away, thou helmsman good.
Over the waters free;
To the charmed Isle of the Seven Kings,
That lies in the midmost sea."

He spread the sail, he took the helm;
And, long ere ever I wist,
We had sailed a league, we had reached the isle
That lay in the golden mist.

The charmèd Isle of the Seven Kings,
'Tis a place of wondrous spell;
And all that happed unto me there
In a printed book I'll tell.

Said I, one day, to the Nautilus,
As we stood on the strand,
"Unmoor my ship, thou helmsman good
And steer me back to land;

"For my mother, I know, is sick at heart,
And longs my face to see.
What ails thee now, thou Nautilus?
Art slow to sail with me?

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

Up! do my will; the wind is fresh
So set the vessel free."

He turned the helm; away we sailed
Towards the setting sun:
The flying fish were swift of wing,
But we outsped each one.

And on we went for seven days,
Seven days without a night;
We followed the sun still on and on,
In the glow of his setting light.

Down and down went the setting sun,
And down and down went we;
'Twas a splendid sail for seven days
On a smooth, descending sea.

On a smooth descending sea we sailed,
Nor breeze the water curled:
My brain grew sick, for I saw we sailed
On the down-hill of the world.

"Good friend," said I to the Nautilus,
"Can this the right course be?
And shall we come again to land?"
But answer none made he;

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

And I saw a laugh in his fishy eye
As he turned it up to me.

So on we went; but soon I heard
A sound as when winds blow,
And waters wild are tumbled down
Into a gulf below.

And on and on flew the little bark,
As a fiend her course did urge;
And I saw, in a moment, we must hang—
Upon the ocean's verge.

I snatched down the sails, I snapped the ropes,
I broke the masts in twain;
But on flew the bark and 'gainst the rocks,
Like a living thing did strain.

"Thou'st steered us wrong, thou helmsman vile!"
Said I to the Nautilus bold;
"We shall down the gulf; we're dead men both!
Dost know the course we hold?"

I seized the helm with a sudden jerk,
And we wheeled round like a bird;
But I saw the Gulf of Eternity,
And the tideless waves I heard.

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

"Good master," said the Nautilus,
"I thought you might desire
To have some wondrous things to tell
Beside your mother's fire.

"What's sailing on a summer sea?
As well sail on a pool;
Oh, but I know a thousand things
That are wild and beautiful!

And if you wish to see them now,
You've but to say the word."
"Have done!" said I to the Nautilus,
"Or I'll throw thee overboard.

"Have done!" said I, "thou mariner old,
And steer me back to land."
No other word spake the Nautilus,
But took the helm in hand.

I looked up to the lady moon,
She was like a glow-worm's spark;
And never a star shone down to us
Through the sky so high and dark.

We had no mast, we had no ropes,
And every sail was rent;

THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS

And the stores I brought from the charmèd isle
In the seven days' sail were spent.

But the Nautilus was a patient thing,
And steered with all his might
On the up-hill sea; and he never slept,
But kept the course aright.

And for thrice seven nights we sailed and sailed;
At length I saw the bay
Where I built my ship, and my mother's house
'Mid the green hills where it lay.

"Farewell!" said I to the Nautilus,
And leaped upon the shore;
"Thou art a skilful mariner,
But I'll sail with thee no more!"

MARY HOWITT.

THE WEIRD LADY

THE swevens came up round Harold the Earl,
Like motes in the sunnès beam;
And over him stood the Weird Lady,
In her charmèd castle over the sea,
Sang "Lie thou still and dream."

"Thy steed is dead in his stall, Earl Harold,
Since thou hast been with me;
The rust has eaten thy harness bright,
And the rats have eaten thy greyhound light,
That was so fair and free."

Mary Mother she stooped from heaven;
She wakened Earl Harold out of his sweven,
To don his harness on;
And over the land and over the sea
He wended abroad to his own countree,
A weary way to gon.

Oh but his beard was white with eld,
Oh but his hair was gray;
He stumbled on by stock and stone,

THE WEIRD LADY

And as he journeyed he made his moan
Along that weary way.

Earl Harold came to his castle wall;
The gate was burnt with fire;
Roof and rafter were fallen down,
The folk were strangers in the town,
And strangers all in the shire.

Earl Harold came to a house of nuns,
And he heard the dead-bell toll;
He saw the sexton stand by a grave;
"Now Christ have mercy, who did us save,
Upon yon fair nun's soul."

The nuns they came from the convent gate
By one, by two, by three;
They sang for the soul of a lady bright
Who died for the love of a traitor knight:
It was his own lady.

He stayed the corpse beside the grave;
"A sign, a sign!" quoth he.
"Mary Mother who rulest heaven,
Send me a sign if I be forgiven
By the woman who so loved me."

THE WEIRD LADY

A white dove out of the coffin flew;
Earl Harold's mouth it kist;
He fell on his face, wherever he stood;
And the white dove carried his soul to God
Or ever the bearers wist.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew.

“Where are you going, and what do you wish?”

The old moon asked the three.

“We have come to fish for the herring fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!”

Said Wynken,

Blynken,

And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew.

The little stars were the herring fish
That lived in that beautiful sea—

“Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
Never afeard are we!”

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

So cried the stars to the fishermen three:

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw

To the stars in the twinkling foam—

Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,

Bringing the fishermen home;

'Twas all so pretty a sail it seemed

As if it could not be,

And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd
dreamed

Of sailing that beautiful sea—

But I shall name you the fisherman three:

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,

And Nod is a little head,

And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies

Is a wee-one's trundle bed.

So shut your eyes while mother sings

Of wonderful sights that be,

And you shall see the beautiful things

As you rock in the misty sea,

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WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

EUGENE FIELD

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

'T WAS on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone on a piece of stone
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh! I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid,
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been
drinking,
And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

And I'll eat my hand if I understand
How you can possibly be :

At once a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn :

" 'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul)
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster-roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So we draw'd a lot, and accordin' shot
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only me and the cook was left,
And the delicate question 'which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook, he worshipped me;
But we'd both be blowed if we'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

" 'I'll be eat if you dines off me' says Tom;
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you'll be,'—

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

'I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I;
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
While I can—and will—cook *you*!"

"So he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shallot,
And some sage and parsley too.

" 'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
'It will soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell!"

"And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less
And—as I eating be

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,
For a vessel in sight I see.

* * * * *

"And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But sit and croak, and a single joke
I have—which is to say:

"Oh! I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight and a midshipmite ,
And the crew of the captain's gig!"

W. S. GILBERT

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